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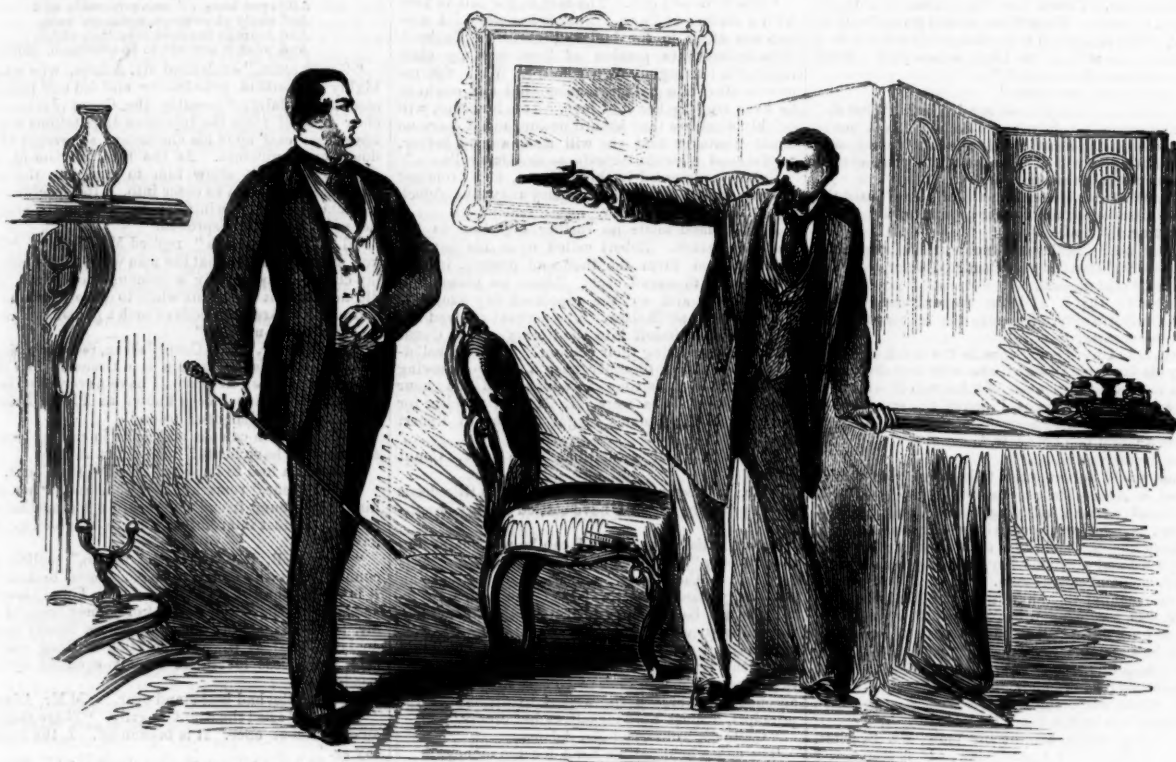
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[IN THE TOILS.]

YORKE SCARLETT; OR, THE MILLIONAIRE.

By the Author of "Evander," "Scarlet Berries,"
"Heart's Content," &c.

CHAPTER VII.

He went like one that hath been stunn'd,
And is of sense forlorn;
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.

Coleridge.

Now that he was suddenly and unexpectedly deprived of Flora Rainham's society, Robert Yorke Scarlett felt a keen and bitter sense of disappointment. More, he began to entertain a sentiment of love for her.

Deep and unfathomable was the mystery surrounding her disappearance.

For some days he was so unwell that he could not leave his room, and Copeland attended upon him with unremitting assiduity, exerting all his skill to bring about his recovery, which he ultimately did.

Robert had long conversations with the doctor respecting the singular delusion with which he was affected.

"This is the third time," he said, "that I have seen a face which marvellously resembles that of my deceased father. What am I to think?"

"Simply, as I have said before, that your nerves are unsettled, and that you want change of air," answered Dr. Copeland. "The delusion is very extraordinary, but I have met with, and read of, similar cases. First you saw a likeness of your father in a footman."

"An exact resemblance."

"As you will. Secondly in a traveller on horseback, and lastly in a gentleman who mistook your house for an inn. You must have change and excitement, or this fancy will grow upon you."

"I will go to London. There is endless dissipation to be found there. To London, doctor, at once. I have a presentiment that it is there I shall meet with Flora."

"Have you abandoned your designs upon her?"

"Not for a moment," exclaimed Robert, earnestly. "This disappointment has only made me more determined to carry them out as originally arranged. I will never rest until I have found her."

"You shall have my best assistance," said Dr. Copeland.

"Of that I am sure; and it is a matter for congratulation that I have the services of so devoted a friend as yourself."

"You pay for them," remarked the doctor, shrugging his shoulders.

"Do you mean by that there is no friendship for me existing on your part?"

"You are scarcely the sort of man to make a friend of. It is simply a matter of bargain and sale between us," replied the doctor, with his peculiar smile. "You want my company and my medical knowledge. You have it because you pay for it."

Robert Yorke Scarlett looked grave, but bursting into a laugh, he replied:

"I like your candour. You are right. If I did not find you useful, I would not keep you for an hour. It is not friendship that binds us together. It is mutual convenience."

"Precisely," replied the doctor, laconically.

The doctor had accurately gauged Robert's character: he was cold, selfish, heartless; still there were good faculties dormant within him, and if a proper train of circumstances could be brought to bear upon him, it was by no means impossible that this good might be aroused, that he would look shudderingly upon his past career and sigh for a better future, which would yet be within his grasp. At present this good influence was absent.

Arrived in London, he recommenced that career of dissipation which had already made his name famous among certain circles both in the metropolis and Paris.

Among the acquaintance he met in his capacity of

a man about town was a Count Lara Jarnac, a middle-aged Frenchman, thin, grizzled, sallow, severe, but withal pleasant and gentlemanlike in his manner.

The Count Jarnac was reputed to be wealthy. Report said that he had large estates in Normandy, and it also said that he had a very pretty daughter, an only child, nearly nineteen years of age.

This was a sufficient reason for Robert Scarlett to cultivate his acquaintance.

The count lived in an old, red brick house at Chelsea, standing in its own grounds, sheltered by large trees, and faced by pleasant shrubs and flowerbeds, which however were sadly neglected. Weeds, rank and luxuriant, grew up side by side with the flowers, a thistle jostled a rose, and a nettle flourished impudently by the side of a tiger lily. Wallflowers, marigolds, and mignonette vied for superiority with chickweed and groundsel, while the modest violet stood no chance whatever with the vigorous dandelion.

Elsie, his daughter, was very pretty. She was dark, with full, lustrous eyes, an oval face, rosy cheeks, lips red as a cherry, petite, but well developed, and had the most charming smile that ever was seen. Her manner was extremely fascinating, and she had many admirers.

Count Jarnac did all he could to bring Robert Yorke Scarlett and Elsie together.

He gave *recherché* dinners to Robert and Dr. Copeland, adding the additional attraction of play afterwards, which the doctor declined on the ground that he could not afford to gamble, but at which Robert often lost large sums.

By degrees Robert fell in love with Elsie. That is to say, he fancied that he could not be happy without her. The count continually talked of his wealth and his estates in Normandy, saying that he would settle a handsome sum on his daughter when she married, and that she should have the title-deeds of an estate worth thirty thousand pounds, producing a net income of a thousand a year.

As Robert's resources had been seriously impaired by his reckless extravagance, he thought seriously of marrying Elsie.

"Doctor," he exclaimed, "what do you say to my settling down, becoming a married man, and living a virtuous life, which would be the wonder of my friends and the envy and admiration of all?"

"If you could find Flora—"

"That will come. At present I speak of Elsie, the lovely daughter of Count Jarnac. Flora I will never abandon, but the money the count will give Elsie would be very agreeable to me just now."

"Once married, you must give up your design against Flora," suggested Dr. Copeland.

"Not at all. I have the constitution of a horse. Elsie is delicate. We will travel and go to the Gold Coast. The miasma of the country will kill her in a month, or we will go to Lima, where yellow fever will carry her off in a week."

"You run the same risk."

"Nonsense. Are you not my doctor? What do I pay and retain you in my service for? Is it not to take care of my health? You will give me disinfectants: you will diet me, and fortify me against disease. I shall have no fear."

"Count Jarnac is no favourite of mine," said the doctor, abandoning the former ground of argument, and taking up another.

"Why not? Is he not noble, rich, hospitable, agreeable? What do you want? Doctor, you are exacting," said Robert.

"Is he all that? I doubt the existence of his estates in Normandy. Suppose the fellow is a penniless adventurer?"

"Absurd. I have confidence in the count, and will marry his daughter, though if she were wise she would avoid me as a pestilence. My heart is Flora's if I have a heart. Sometimes I doubt the existence of that abstraction which beats under the fifth rib. That is from a moral point of view."

The doctor was silent.

Thus would Robert often talk, striving to render himself as detestable as possible in the eyes of a right-thinking man, vilifying himself, making himself out, perhaps, worse than he really was, though, goodness knows, that was a difficult task, for, from a wayward and a vicious boy, he had grown up into a hard, bad, and callous man.

Elsie's manner to him was constrained when her father was not present, but when either he or her mother were in the room, she seemed to force herself to be agreeable to him.

At length he made a formal proposition to Count Lara Jarnac for her hand.

The count was delighted.

Taking him by the hand, he said:

"Nothing would delight me more, Mr. Scarlett, than to have you for a son-in-law. It is true that I have good old Norman blood in my veins, and belong to a family ennobled for centuries. What of that? You are one of that great middle class which makes England what she is. You shall have my daughter."

"I thank you very much," replied Robert, "for your good opinion of me, which I will endeavour always to deserve. I am not able to make a settlement upon Elsie of the magnitude of which you spoke, because my means will not permit me to do, but—"

"I will give the girl thirty thousand pounds in land; you shall give her ten thousand in money. Make me the sole trustee of the joint settlement. Bring the share, which I suppose you are willing to contribute, here this day week in the notes of Bank of England, and I will produce the title-deeds."

"Yes, I can do that. My confidence in you is quite sufficient. Let your attorney be present, and mine shall attend with the money, which shall be delivered to you. But when we are married, the thousand a year the land will produce, and my money, must be paid into some bank to my wife's account."

"By all means. I have no objection to that. My means are ample, and the settlement is solely for the girl's benefit, not mine," answered Count Jarnac.

This arranged, Robert had only to speak to Elsie, which he did on the following day.

Exhibiting her usual constrained manner when her parents were absent, Elsie listened to his suit with a sadness painfully apparent when he had told her how he loved her, and that the count favoured his advances, and had given him permission to make them.

She replied,

"I cannot disobey my father."

"Have you nothing kinder than that to say to me?" he asked, somewhat disappointed.

"I will try to love you," she replied, sorrowfully. "It will be a hard task, because—because—you would pity me if you knew my story. It is useless, however, to weary you with a tale of grief. I thank you for honouring me with your affection; and as my father wishes it, and my mother is also an advocate of the match, I will marry you. It is use-

less to discuss the matter further. Consider it an affair settled."

"This is not my idea of making love which leads to marriage," observed Robert, with a smile. "Still it saves a great deal of trouble, and you are a sensible girl."

He kissed her with an affectation of tenderness, pressed her hand and told her to fix the day, after consulting with her mother.

When he gave Count Jarnac an account of his interview with Elsie, the count laughed, and said:

"She is an odd girl. The fact is, she fell in love with a student at Paris. That is her story. I nipped the affair in the bud and came to England. This unfortunate passion of hers was my chief reason for leaving my own country. With the romantic ideas of a girl she fancies that she ought to be ever true to her first love. You, however, will quickly dissipate that absurd notion, and I have no doubt whatever that she will make a good, loving, careful, and affectionate wife, as the time rolls on."

Robert acquiesced in this opinion, and promised to come with the settlement money at twelve o'clock on the following Tuesday.

Dr. Copeland made no further objection to the proposed match. Robert called upon his bankers and got from them ten thousand pounds, in ten notes for a thousand each. These he placed in a pocket book, and on the appointed day drove to the old house at Chelsea. The servant showed Dr. Copeland and himself into the library, where Count Jarnac was awaiting their coming. The two solicitors were talking together near a window, having arrived some little time in advance of the hour fixed. Their names were, Mr. Motley, solicitor for the count; Mr. Adams, legal adviser to Robert Scarlett.

After the usual salutations were over, Count Jarnac said:

"Mr. Adams, are you satisfied with the title deeds of the property which I have settled on my daughter?"

"I am satisfied as far as I can be without seeing the property," answered the solicitor.

"Here is the money," exclaimed Robert, holding out the pocket book in which the notes were. "There can be no doubt about the genuineness of these shiny promises to pay."

The count rose and said: "It is understood that I am the trustee for my daughter. I shall invest this money for her, and place the interests to her account; of course if she wishes to dispose of the principal, I must hold myself at her orders."

"Quite so," observed Mr. Adams.

The count held out his hand for the money.

Robert was about to give him the large sum under consideration, when the door opened, and a man dressed as a policeman entered, walking towards the Count Jarnac, and keeping his back sedulously turned to Robert.

The count turned pale, and his pallor deepened when the new comer exclaimed:

"I forbid you to touch that money. I am here to protect that young gentleman from being robbed."

"You insolent scoundrel," vociferated the count, angrily. "Out of this house! I know nothing of you, and you know nothing of me. This is some impudent attempt to extort money!"

"These gentlemen shall judge," answered the constable. "Fifteen years ago you were tried by the correctional tribunal of police at Aix for swindling, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and two years' supervision by the police. Afterwards you were tried and condemned at the assizes of the Seine for a daring robbery, and as Pierre Leroux you have suffered twelve months' imprisonment in this country for a robbery from the person on a race course. Shall I go on, Jacques Sardon?"

The count was livid; he strove to speak, but was unable to articulate; sinking back in his chair, he gasped for breath. Mr. Motley, his solicitor, looked uneasy.

Turning round abruptly, the man dressed in the uniform of a police constable, addressing Robert, continued:

"Put your money in your pocket, unless you want it to become the prey of swindlers. Break off all connection with this pretended count, who is a notorious sharper. The girl Elsie is a decoy, and you have been preceded in her pretended esteem by other victims."

Then he walked slowly to the door, which he opened, and disappeared in the same noiseless and mysterious manner in which he had entered.

Robert stared after him, with eyes starting from their sockets. Trembling in every limb, he extended his arm, and pointing to the retreating figure, seized Dr. Copeland with his disengaged hand, holding it in a vice-like grip, which was positively painful, him.

"There he is again! Did not you see and recognise him, doctor?"

"No. Whom do you mean?" demanded Dr. Copeland.

"The dread phantom, my father's face, oh! heavens this is too much!" exclaimed Robert.

And he sank into a chair as much perturbed and overcome as was the Count Lara Jarnac.

"Extraordinary hallucination" muttered Dr. Copeland.

CHAPTER VIII.

What though the field be lost?

All is not lost; th' unconquerable will

And study of revenge, immortal hate,

And courage never to submit or yield;

And what is else not to be overcome. *Milton.*

"GENTLEMEN," exclaimed Mr. Adams, who was a highly respectable practitioner and did not like the aspect of affairs; "possibly the Count Jarnac can clear himself from the injurious imputations which have been cast upon his character; at present all is doubt and conjecture. As the legal adviser of Mr. Scarlett, I cannot allow him to complete the contract we were about to enter into. Its specific performance can only be insisted upon, when the allegations just made are disproved."

"That is fair enough," replied Mr. Motley. "But you must remember that the man who has denounced my client, is apparently a common policeman, who did not think it worth his while to give us his name and address. Ardwelt to believe such a person, who may be actuated by malice?"

"I will swear," cried Count Jarnac, recovering himself, "the whole accusation is a tissue of foul lies. I have never been in prison, I have never even been accused, nor have I been known as Pierre Leroux, nor is my name Jacques Sardon."

"What notion can the man have in coming here to say what we have heard?" asked Mr. Adams.

"I am at a loss to imagine," replied the Count.

"This scene," remarked Dr. Copeland, "has unhinged my young friend's nerves. As his medical attendant, I must interdict any more excitement to-day."

"Very well, it's immaterial to me," replied the count. "Let the marriage be considered broken off; it is I who shall be the gainer, for I was about to settle three times the amount of money brought by Mr. Scarlett upon my daughter, whose beauty is undeniable, against whose reputation nothing can be said, and whose loveliness is only equalled by her goodness."

"The matter had best stand over," said Mr. Adams.

"No, no," cried the count angrily. "There shall be an end of it at once. It is broken off. I, the father, say so."

"Come," exclaimed Dr. Copeland, raising Robert up and offering him his arm. The doctor bowed. Robert took no notice of anybody. They left the room and Mr. Adams followed them.

There was a seat for the solicitor in the carriage, and he was set down at his office door. The second stoppage was at the bank, where the ten thousand pounds were re-deposited by the doctor's advice.

On reaching his chambers at the West End, Robert lay on the sofa smoking havannahs that cost a shilling a-piece and drinking champagne.

The doctor went out for a stroll; when he returned Robert was still taciturn and moody.

"You have had a narrow escape" he exclaimed, sitting down, "I did not know that it was the custom of the police to watch with such parental interest over the gilded youth of this great city, but certain it is that the so-called Count Jarnac is known at Scotland Yard, and is a consummate impostor. Mr. Motley's name is not in the law list, among the solicitors; he is probably an accomplice; you have saved your money."

"It is odd," replied Robert.

"The most extraordinary part of the affair, which borders a little upon the marvellous, is the persistence with which your delusion haunts you."

"Did you not remark the likeness that policeman bore to my father?" asked Robert eagerly.

"Certainly not, I was unable to trace any resemblance between them."

"I am a haunted man," exclaimed Robert with a deep sigh.

"Your mind must have been powerfully affected by reading the letter written you by your father, the contents of which were repeated in the will."

"No, not that I am aware of."

"Oh! the effect was imperceptible at the time, though it must have been so. In tracing the relation between cause and effect, we must despise no incident on account of its apparent triviality."

Robert Yorke Scarlett made no answer.

"You are a cup too low; the wine you are drinking in this solitary, moping manner will make you nervous," exclaimed Dr. Copeland. "Come with me and dine at Richmond, and go to the theatre afterwards!"

"Do with me as you like," answered Robert. "I want to forget the events of the morning. It seems fated that I shall not get married; yet Elsie is a nice girl—a radiant creature."

"In league with her father. Cannot you see through the plot?"

"Not exactly."

"I will explain. The plan was to get possession of your ten thousand pounds. As for the estates in Normandy—all moonshine. A fine trustee the count would have made. He would have up and away as soon as you had deposited the money with him and taken your departure. If you met him again it would have been as an Austrian baron, or a French captain. You are much indebted to that policeman, whatever his motive may have been in unmasking the count."

"I could have loved Elsie for a week or two," observed Robert, with his usual recklessness.

"She then has usurped Flora's place in your affections?"

"A momentary eclipse, that is all. As I told you before, doctor, I am resolved to discover Flora and carry out my original designs in regard to her."

The doctor smiled.

They drove to Richmond, dined, enjoyed the splendid view from the gardens of the hotel after dinner, and returned to town in time to drop into a theatre at half-price.

It was late when they reached home.

On the table was lying a note, the envelope addressed in a lady's hand. By its side was a slip of paper on which something was written.

Robert took up the slip first.

It contained these words:

"If you wish once more to see one whom you asserted to be very dear to you, be at the Apsley House end of Rotten Row at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning.—Tuesday Evening."

Robert rang the bell.

"Who brought this slip of paper?" he said to the servant of the house.

"A footman in livery, blue and gold, sir," answered the domestic.

"Was there any further message?"

"None, sir."

When the servant was gone, Robert opened the note. It was from Elsie.

She said:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"I have heard all. I am grieved deeply, for I had reconciled myself to a union with you, which you know was at first repugnant to me, owing to a former attachment. I may say more without accusing myself of immaturity—I have begun to love you. Judge of my distress then when my father related to me the gross calumnies of which he has been the object, and the cessation of friendly relations between you. 'All is over. It is broken off.' These are the only words I can extract from him. My misery is perfect. Oh, if I could see you once again! May I hope for this? Will you deny me the poor but sweet privilege of meeting you once more? To-morrow evening my father dines at his club. He leaves here at seven, and will not be home till late. Will you come to see me about eight? I long to see you, if only for a minute. It will comfort me in the long weary years to come. I await you with open arms. A thousand kind wishes.

"Ever your desolate,
ELsie."

"Read that, doctor, while I open some Moselle," said Robert, giving the doctor the letter.

"Well," said the latter, when he had finished its perusal, "a most artfully concocted epistle—a trap, in fact. Of course you will disregard it."

"No. I shall go," replied Robert.

"Go! You cannot be in earnest! You will go to this meeting and run the risk of putting yourself in the hands of out-throats? Madness! utter madness!"

"I shall go," repeated Robert, in his quiet, determined manner, which the doctor well knew the meaning of.

"Now read the slip," added Robert.

"By Jove!" cried Dr. Copeland, "it seems to me that we are in the very centre of intrigue."

"Which pleases me. I never yet feared any man, living or dead."

"Robert!"

"I live in excitement."

"Because you have no enjoyment in true happiness, which cannot exist without virtue," replied the doctor.

Not finding this sort of conversation to his taste, Robert declined to enter into an argument, and Dr. Copeland had it all his own way.

Though it was late before he went to rest, he was up earlier the next morning and strolled lazily towards the park. The Row was beginning to get crowded. Leaning on the railings, Robert looked anxiously before and on each side of him.

Could it be Flora that he was going to see?

His heart beat more quickly than was its wont. The clock at Westminster boomed out the hour.

Suddenly a lady on horseback entered the Row, followed by a groom. She was mounted upon a magnificent Arab, and from the symmetry of her form, and from the admirable way in which she sat her horse, she attracted the admiration of all who saw her.

As she passed Robert she turned her head, and catching his eye, smiled upon him.

A cry rose to his lips.

It was Flora.

He held out his hands as if beseeching her to stop, but, touching her horse lightly with her whip, the noble animal bounded forward, and, with great rapidity, carried her from his view.

Though he was on foot he hastened after her, but without success. He could see no trace of her. Wandering from one end of Rotten Row to the other, he was still unsuccessful. She had quitted the park.

That it was Flora, he could not doubt, unless he was afflicted with a double hallucination, and doomed henceforth to fancy he saw his cousin when she was far away.

She had smiled upon him.

That was a consolation; for though he had been unfaithful to her memory, she grew fonder and dearer to him in her absence, for men of his disposition are always more eager in the search after the apparently unattainable.

He went home pleased to find that Flora was in London, and resolved to exert himself to the utmost to discover in what part of the town she was living.

It was a strange contradiction that he should resolve, after vainly regretting his inability to overtake Flora, to visit Elsie in response to her note.

However, when the time came, he presented himself at the old house in Chelsea, telling Dr. Copeland that he should not be long absent, and begging him to await his return.

The door, in reply to his knock, was opened by Elsie herself, who looked ill and troubled.

Putting her finger on her lips, as if to enjoin silence, she whispered, "Be on your guard."

"Against what?" he said, in the same low tone.

"My father compelled me to write you. It was not done of my own free will, and I fear he means you harm," she answered.

At this moment Count Jarnac opened the door of his study, which abutted on the entrance hall, and said, "Who is that, Elsie?"

"Mr. Scarlett," she replied.

"Oh! indeed. I scarcely expected the honour of a visit from Mr. Scarlett," he rejoined. "Nevertheless, I shall be glad to speak to him if he will come into my study."

"Be careful," whispered Elsie again.

Robert stepped boldly forward and entered the study. He thought he heard the click of a key to the lock, but he was not sure. When he turned to see if the key had been moved he saw the count standing close to him.

"Well, sir!" ejaculated the Count Jarnac.

"I will explain why I am here," exclaimed Robert. "My visit was not to you, but to your daughter, and at her express invitation."

"This is insolent."

"I think not. There is her letter."

Robert tossed the letter contemptuously on the table.

"Yes," said Jarnac, looking at it, "that is my daughter's handwriting; we must make some allowance for the girl's feelings, as the match is broken off, though I shall remonstrate with her rather strongly upon her injudicious conduct, which is without excuse."

Robert laughed.

"Your daughter informed me just now that the letter was written under compulsion, if not at your dictation, and begged me to be on my guard against some contemplated treachery on your part," he said.

"You must think me a very great villain, Mr. Scarlett, if you believe what that policeman, and even my own child, say against me," remarked the count.

"I do think you one."

"Indeed!"

"Most assuredly."

"In that case I will do all I can do to deserve your bad opinion," said Count Jarnac, changing his tone and manner from commonplace civility to insolent defiance. "Sit down, if you please, we may be some time together. I can offer you wine and cigars."

"The latter I always carry, so that I will not trouble you. As for the wine, shall refuse."

"Judiciously answered. I shall indulge myself to the extent of a glass or two," replied the count, who took some wine and glasses from a sideboard.

Robert paced the room uneasily.

"Pray sit down," continued the count, "the door is locked, and you cannot leave this room until I please. For a time you are my prisoner. It is necessary that we should talk."

Robert sat down. His face was pallid, and its muscles compressed, and drawn tight. His eyes flashed with a subdued fire, which showed that he saw he was drawn into a trap from which, with all his courage, he should have some difficulty in escaping. Dr. Copeland was right, and Elsie was right, and he had acted with characteristic foolhardiness in disregarding their warning.

"Finding that you were young, susceptible, and easily imposed upon," began Count Jarnac, "I selected you from several others as a victim of my superior cleverness. I baited the hook, as I have done on former occasions, with the charms of my daughter, and a large sum of money, derivable from imaginary estates in France; if I said castles in Spain you would have believed me. An accident at the last moment prevented me from obtaining your money."

"And you will never have the chance again," observed Robert, with a sarcastic laugh.

"Pardon me. I have it now."

"You must be mistaken. All the money I have in my pocket is a few pounds. From whence will you get ten thousand?"

"Easily enough," replied the Count Jarnac, quietly. "I have a sheet of paper, receipt stamp, pens and ink. You will write a cheque upon your banker's for that sum and I shall go to-morrow morning and get the money."

"What is to become of me in the meanwhile, supposing, for the sake of argument, you get the cheque from me?" inquired Robert.

"You will be obliged to remain where you are. The sofa makes an excellent couch. Food and drink shall be provided, and there are books, French and English, with which to while away the time."

The smile, caused by the Frenchman's audacity, faded from Robert Yorke Scarlett's face, and he became angry again.

"This is becoming serious," he exclaimed.

"Now that I know I am in the presence of a swindler I must see if I cannot devise some measures to escape."

"It is useless," answered the Count. "All precautionary measures to prevent such an occurrence have been taken. Submit quietly, and much unpleasantness will be spared you."

"I will never submit!" cried Robert. "You shall take my life sooner than I will give you the money you are trying to rob me of."

"That is the language of disappointment and chagrin. Be calm, I beg of you. The only way to carry on this important conversation satisfactorily is to put anger on one side, and look at the matter from an equable and business-like point of view. This is an old trick of mine. I am an accomplished hand at it. No one, I assure you, Mr. Scarlett, could do it better. You do not know the extent of my resources."

Robert smiled again in spite of his rage. The impudence of the Frenchman and his coolness were inimitable.

"Under this room," continued Count Jarnac, "is a cellar, long disused. I had the door bricked up, and a trap door made in this apartment; which, by means of a ladder and a shaft, enables me to communicate freely with the vault. There are chairs, tables, carpet, a sofa, lamp, and other articles of comfort and use, if not of luxury, which make it a tolerable, perhaps desirable prison. If you are obstinate, you will stay in that prison until you consent to give me a cheque for ten thousand pounds, and the delights of the world are such, that any young man would long to return to them in a week, and make any sacrifice to do so."

"Villain!" cried Robert, seizing the poker which lay in the grate, "Give me the key of this room, and let me go, or I will flog you as I would a bullock. This farce is played out."

In an instant a small pistol was presented at Robert's head, which checked his onward career; he dropped the poker, and, with a sullen air, sank back in his seat.

Count Jarnac's mocking laughter sounded in his ear with a fiendish ring.

Still the polished steel barrel of the pistol gleamed in the gaslight, and the count toyed with the curiously-wrought hilt, which was of quaintly-carved ivory.

CHAPTER IX.

From the overhanging branches,
From the tassels of the birch-trees,
Soft the Spirit of Sleep descended.

Hævælia.

So accomplished in practical villany did Count Jarnac seem, that Robert Yorke Scarlett feared he

should not escape with his life. Still he entertained the utmost repugnance to part with the large sum of money demanded from him. This was the more disagreeable, as the balance at his bankers' was day by day growing lamentably less, and unless he recruited his finances a little, poverty stared him in the face.

"It goes very much against the grain with me," exclaimed the count after a pause, "to treat a gentleman with whom I have been on friendly terms in this manner. However, there is no help for it unless you meet my wishes."

"I have already told you that I shall not comply with them. If it was a question of a hundred pounds I might yield."

"Of no use whatever. I fly at high game. Big things are the only robberies I care about perpetrating," interrupted Count Jarnac.

"Very well, once for all," said Robert, with decision, "understand that I will not comply with your request."

"That is final?"

"It is. If you suffer me to depart now without any further trouble I will forego my duty to the public, and not prosecute you; but by Heaven, if I experience any more annoyance from you, I will, as soon as I am able, charge you with an attempt to extort money, and send you to gaol as a common swindler."

"Not common," ejaculated the count, with a smile, "at least give me the credit of being uncommon. I rather pride myself upon my talent."

"This is childish," exclaimed Robert. "I refuse to hold any further conversation with you, and again demand my liberty."

Count Jarnac took up a match which he struck against the grate. On the table was a small golden vase filled with a coloured powder.

He dropped the match in this, and with extraordinary rapidity a dense smoke arose.

The vapour, which had a peculiar aromatic odour, penetrated to every part of the room in a few seconds, and raised so dense a cloud that Robert could not distinguish any object.

He rose and groped his way in the darkness, as he thought to the window, but he touched the wall.

At the same moment he heard the door open and shut.

Count Jarnac had taken advantage of the friendly cloud to make his escape, locking the door again on the outside.

Robert made a tour of the room with difficulty. The door was immovable. The shutters were up at the window and he could not unfasten them.

All this time he was conscious of an oppression of the brain, and a choking sensation in the throat and lungs.

The subtle vapour was depriving him of his senses. He endeavoured to cry out, but without avail. At length he could bear it no longer, and with a groan he sank on his hands and knees upon the floor, beating back the smoke with his hands, and fighting to the last with the influence which was overcoming him. Completely conquered in the course of a minute, he fell forward on his face and lapsed into insensibility.

When he came to himself he was lying on a sofa in a circular vaulted apartment. A lamp, suspended by an iron chain from the ceiling, shed light around.

On a table were a cold chicken, a ham, wine and beer; chairs and a washstand were placed in their proper positions; and on a side table were a box of cigars—excellent Partagas—and several books and newspapers.

There was no apparent outlet, though a gloomy-looking shaft suggested a descent from above.

From the description that Count Lara Jarnac had given of his cellar-prison, Robert could not doubt that immediate advantage had been taken of his insensibility caused by the subtle vapour diffused throughout the room, which a current of air would soon remove, and that he had been silently conveyed to the strange vault in which he found himself.

His reflections were not of the most pleasant nature. He was, however, of that disposition which at all times endeavours to make the best of things. He drank some sherry, ate heartily of the chicken and ham, drew the cork of a bottle of beer, and lighted one of the choice Partagas.

As he was about to select something to read to while away the time until he threw himself on the sofa to sleep, rugs being provided as a covering, he saw a letter addressed to him.

Hastily opening it, he read:

"That which I threatened I have carried out. It is absolutely necessary that I should have the ten thousand pounds, which has formed the basis of all our negotiations. I have endeavoured to make your captivity as agreeable to you as I can, and shall continue to do so for a week. At the expiration of that time, as your imprisonment depends entirely upon

yourself, I shall institute a diet of bread and water. By no earthly chance can you emerge from your living tomb unless you consent to pay the ransom I demand; therefore for your own sake, as well as for my interest, I advise your immediate compliance. No one but myself knows where you are confined, so that should anything happen to me you must inevitably die a miserable death. This is an additional reason why you should consent to pay, as human life in this metropolis is never safe."

"I shall await the course of events," said Robert, as he finished the reading of this letter.

An evening newspaper enabled him to while away an hour as agreeably as if he had been at his club. The cigars were capital; the wine unexceptionable.

He came to the conclusion that so far he was treated with much more consideration than the majority of prisoners, and as an adventure of sterling interest, and a change in the monotony of every-day life in London, he hailed what had happened to him with some pleasure, though his heart was, in spite of his assurance, troubled with grave doubts.

Daring and talent, even when turned to a bad account, he could admire, and he entertained some admiration for Count Lara Jarnac, who had certainly accomplished his plans with marvellous precision and success so far.

The more Robert thought over his position the less chance he saw of escaping. How was he to get out of a dungeon constructed with such ingenuity? The ladder had been drawn up and it was utterly impossible to ascend the shaft.

Ten thousand pounds was the sum fixed upon as his ransom. If he paid that he would be liberated at once, and the count would be at liberty to prosecute his nefarious schemes in another place.

Though he did not value money very highly, he cared for what money produced, and he knew from experience that ten thousand pounds could purchase an immensity of enjoyment, which he would be handing over to the count, as it were.

"He will visit me here," he muttered, "and I will strangle him like a wild beast where he stands!"

When he had smoked and drank until his intellect became slightly clouded he threw himself upon the couch, drew a couple of rugs over his body, and disposed himself to sleep.

How long he slept he knew not.

He was roused by hearing a peculiar knocking against the wall on the north side of the vault.

Springing up he listened attentively.

The lamp was still burning brightly, and he saw that he was the sole occupant of the dungeon.

The noise then came from outside. It was faint but regular.

"Oh, it is somebody in the next house driving a nail in the wall," he muttered.

The noise continued, a steady hammering as of a hammer against a chisel inserted between the bricks which composed the wall.

He disposed himself to sleep.

So persistent, however, was the noise that he could not close his eyes again, and sitting up, he lighted another cigar and impatiently awaited the sequel of what he supposed was a fresh adventure.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE SOLAR TEMPERATURE.—Padre Secchi states that the temperature of the sun undoubtedly reaches many millions of degrees, though the means of estimating it are imperfect. This high degree of heat may have been caused by the force of gravitation, which has united the elements of which the central point of our solar system has been made up; the initial temperature, therefore, the result of mechanical action, will, of necessity, have been greater than the present temperature of the sun is, which is certainly cooling down. But whatever this loss of heat may be, it is imperceptible to us, as it is slowly taking place, and partly compensated by chemical actions which take place in the sun, which is most probably in its interior a mass of strongly compressed and condensed nebulous matter.

THE LATEST EXCAVATIONS IN POMPEII.—Some excavations have been made in some houses situated on the right of the Via Stabiana, and a variety of treasures were found, viz., a large number of objects in terra cotta, iron, and bronze, a beautifully-chiselled silver cup, a very rare glass oil lamp, a still rarer and perhaps unique object, consisting of a small terra cotta cup with a metallic cup inside containing a night-lamp like those in modern use, a large gladiator's sword, with the metallic portions of the scabbard; many copper and silver coins of the time of Vespasian, and an amphora full of small onions near the skeleton of a woman. The skeleton of a man was also discovered, holding a pickaxe in one hand, an iron bar in the other, and with many bronze objects scattered at his feet, near a wall, which had been partially broken through.

SILVER.—The tenacity of silver has been studied by Matthiessen, and can be stated for comparison as follows:—Alloy of tin and copper, 1; gold, 3·6 to 4·3; copper, 4·3; silver, 7·2; platinum, 7·2; iron, 13; steel, 30. It is so ductile that a grain of it can be drawn out 400ft., and it can be hammered into leaves so thin that it would require 100,000 of them to make a pile an inch in height. Its conductivity for heat is to copper in the ratio of 100 to 73·6; and for electricity, as 1,000 to 954. Cast silver expands, according to Calvert, between 0 degree and 100 degree per cent., 0·001991; and its specific heat is 0·05701. Although silver conducts heat remarkably well, its power of radiation is very small, so that a silver vessel retains the heat of a liquid contained in it longer than any other metal. Pure silver, if highly heated in oxygen, will absorb 6·15 to 7·47 volumes of that gas, and, under the same circumstances, will take up 0·907 to 0·938 volumes of hydrogen, 0·496 to 0·545 carbonic acid, and 0·15 carbonic oxide—in this property differing considerably from palladium.

RAILWAY MATTERS.—A new method of warming first-class carriages in express trains has been adopted in Bavaria. A special van is attached to the train, and contains a powerful "calorifer," and the heated air is conveyed to all the carriages of the train by means of india-rubber tubes. The experiment with first-class carriages is reported upon so favourably that the authorities have determined to apply it to all the carriages on the Bavarian lines, and it is expected that it will soon be adopted on all the German railways.—The singular names possessed by stations on many of the Illinois roads have often been noticed, such as Plans, Loda, Pana, Polo, &c. A Western paper now explains that when the stations on the Illinois Central Railroad were fixed upon, it was deemed advisable, so far as possible, to give them Indian names, but so numerous were they that this would exhaust an ordinary Indian vocabulary. Accordingly, to obviate this difficulty, a quantity of vowels and consonants were written on slips of paper, and placed in a hat. These were all stirred up, and a few drawn out at random, when a clerk was required to exercise his ingenuity in forming them into a word.

DR. ANGUS SMITH ON THE CHEMICAL EXAMINATION OF AIR.—Dr. Angus Smith recently read a very important paper at a meeting of the Association of Medical Officers of Health. The subject was the "Examination of Air," and the most striking feature was the announcement that he had detected and measured the nitrogenous matter in different kinds of air, and that between country air and the air of towns or of close rooms there was a most marked difference in this respect. The process adopted by Dr. Smith was very novel and ingenious. It consists in shaking up a small quantity of perfectly pure water with a measured volume of the air to be examined, by which operation the organic impurity of the air is transferred to the water, which is afterwards analysed by the ammonia-process invented by Wanklyn, Chapman, and Smith. The author of the paper expressed great confidence in results he had obtained, and said that he would not scruple to ask for the demolition of all crowded courts in towns, the atmosphere of which presented the characteristic signs of contaminated air.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ARCHAEOLOGY, 1870.—The programme of the fifth session of the International Congress of Anthropology and of Prehistoric Archaeology, which will take place in October of this year, at Bologna, has been issued by Professors Giovanni Capellini, the Secretary to the Acting Committee. As it may be useful to some of our readers, we give all the essential parts of it. The session will commence on the 1st of October, and will terminate on the 8th of that month; and the meeting will be under the presidency of the learned archaeologist, Count Giovanni Gozzadini. During the meeting of the Congress, excursions will be made to Marzabotto to inspect an ancient necropolis, and to Modena to study the *Terramare* of the neighbourhood; and visits will be paid to Ravenna to view all its famous monuments. The Italian Exhibition of Anthropology and of Prehistoric Archaeology, established by the Government to assist the studies of the Congress, will remain open for the members of the Congress during the whole period of the meeting, as well as the Museums of Archaeology and of Natural History belonging to the University of Bologna, the Picture Galleries, and the public and private archaeological collections of Bologna. The Committee propose the following questions for study and discussion at this fifth session: 1. The Stone Period in Italy; 2. The Caverns of the Shores of the Mediterranean, and especially of Tuscany, as compared with the Grottoes of the South of France; 3. The Lacustral Dwellings and the *Torbiere* of the North of Italy; 4. The Chronology of the Substitution of Iron for Bronze; 5. The Analogy between the *Terramare* and the Kjoekken Moedding; 6. Various Cranio-logical Questions relating to the different Races which have peopled the different parts of Italy.



[RETURNING HEALTH.]

FAITHFUL MARGARET.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Love will find its way
Through paths where wolves would fear to prey,
And if it dares enough 'twere hard
If passion met not some reward. *Byron.*

"Circles of brightening light breaking over me; a faint, but delicious sense of comfort, a swift vanishing of the distorted phantoms which have left me here for dead—a kind and dear awakening. What tender face is this that is bending over me? What soft bosom is this upon which my head is lying?"

"Have I bridged at last the chasm of mortality, and is this my fate in the immortal world?"

"This is heaven! What seraph is this, who is bearing me upon her bosom after my fight with the throes of death? How soft and cool her hand which soothes my brow! her wings are folded close, and she will not fly away; her breath wafts my weary eyelids like the zephyr born at the gates of Paradise."

"It was worth that long battle with the writhing furies, who would have chained me to Charon's boat, midway in the awful river, to be stranded here within these clinging arms."

"Oh, spirit pure and tender, am I done with earth and sin, and entered into rest upon your hallowed heart?"

"Yes, the dark obscurity of earth no longer blinds me; I am reading the face of one who has gazed upon the Incarnate, and caught from Him benediction past utterance."

"How pure and above all earthly beauty are these holy lineaments! the essence of eternal love seems to fall from these eyes upon my languid soul; her rich tresses seem enwreathed with beams from the Fount of Joy; I am dazzled with the vision!"

The worn, white face of the sick man sinks more heavily upon the gentle bosom, which supports it; but there is a fixed smile upon the blue lips of wonder and of triumph; there are tears stealing from the eyes which have been darkly fixed upward; the trembling soul who has been looking into the realm of the unknown, turns back at the yearning pressure of these arms, and new circles of brightening light and consciousness break over him, and St. Udo Brand looks up.

A cool perfume breathes around him of flowers, he seems to be surrounded by these sweet comforters; flowers upon his breast, against his fevered face, upon his pillow; and soft arms are

truly around him, and his head is lying upon the yielding breast of a woman.

"How is it that I am here?"

"Did my darling try to speak?"

"How strange! she is then some one to whom I am dear. I am, indeed, in heaven, and this heavenly seraph is to be my guide and teacher. What made me suppose for an instant that I was back on earth? It is so much better than I deserve, pure spirit—so much better!"

"Did you say you felt better?"

"This vision is a woman! her heart seems bounding with joy; she bends closer with a sob of rapture; these eyes are dropping tears. 'There are no tears in heaven.' Is it possible that I come back to earth and find some one weeping tears of joy for me? Tell me who you are."

"You have whispered something again. Oh, love, you are so faint and weak that I can scarcely see your lips move! But I think you know me?"

"No, no; I left no such angel as you on earth when I died!"

"Do you say no? Wait until I bring my ear close."

"No. Tell me."

"Don't you know your nurse, who has been with you for two weeks? the nurse that you have clung to, and moaned for when your glazed eyes could not see me? Don't you remember how you made me hold you—just so—when the fever-phantoms were chasing you? Surely we are old friends by this time?"

"My Perdita?"

"Why, darling, do you know me, then? Now I shall dare to hope—oh, thank Heaven!"

"How strange that she should look so joyful at any good befalling me. Am I St. Udo Brand, who was at odds with all the world? or have I been changed into a man with a human heart, to be prized by a noble woman? Is this a revised and improved edition of St. Udo? Have I got out of that bitter, reckless being, and after ages of toiling in a black, demon-crowded abyss for my sins, have I re-entered the world to be simple, and beloved, and happy? Oh, Thou who saved me from annihilation, decree that this be true! Lady, will you not tell me your name?"

"You called me 'Perdita' when I thought the fever was drifting you from my arms farther—farther—and yet the closer into my heart—call me Perdita still. Oh, my darling, to think that after all, I have won you from the gates of death!"

"How long have we loved each other, Perdita? Why do these deep gray eyes hide themselves from me? Why does that flush creep to brow and gentle

cheek? What a dear face! What a holy face! I hope that it will beam upon me until I die! What is it that she says?"

"I found you smitten with the plague, and, taking care of you, because there was no one else who had such a right, as the marplot of your life, you came to think me some one whom you loved, and to call me Perdita. It was one of your fancies."

"I hope it will develop into a reality. I shall pinion your wings, bright seraph, to keep you by me."

"Hush—hush! You are wandering away again. Keep by me, my love—Perdita; oh, keep by me."

"As if I would ever leave you, while I could make one moment lighter."

"Ah, well! Remember you have promised that." He sinks softly down among his pillows with a sigh of ineffable peace; his Perdita wipes the tears of joy from his face, and re-arranges the light coverings.

A soft wind is blowing through the half-closed windows, from over the quiet water clasped in the arms of the coral reef; and the dreamy strains of a military band creep from a war-ship out in the bay; and in the beautiful twilight, the graceful boats are shooting in and out from orange groves to the white huts standing on the edge of the reefs like Grecian temples, and the lovely scene is calm as the smile on the face of the sick man.

The light curtain is drawn closely round the invalid's bed, and his nurse sits within the fold and watches him until he sinks to sleep. And then she bends her head until it touches his hand, and weeping much in her deep thankfulness, she too sinks to slumber, well earned and long denied.

The same hour next evening St. Udo Brand comes to himself again from his mystic depths of fever and sorrow and importunate desire, to see the same tender vision watching over him, and to breathe the same sweet perfume of fresh-culled flowers, and to feel the same restful joy which broke the darkness of his weary trance before.

And he is so glad to find this dream staying by him when so many others have slipped away, that he stretches out his hands, and beckons with a cry of welcome.

"My Perdita, I feared I had lost you! Where did you go?"

"I have never left your side!"

"I could not find you, and I have been wandering, wandering everywhere. How was it you got away from my hand?"

She, bending her ear to catch these feeble accents, glows with a look of wonder and joy; all the lines

of weariness pass away from her face; for the moment she is quite beautiful.

"Dear one, was it really me you were trying to hold in your sleep?" she asks, softly; "I saw your brow gather and your lips move, and an anxious expression come over you in every little slumber, but when I held your hand you clasped mine tightly, and became happy in your dreams. Was it Perdita whom you wished so much to keep by you?"

"Yes, yes; that was it. You express my thoughts so truly for me that I wish you would try again. Something has got away from me after all. Let me hold you, while I try to remember."

She gives him her hand, and she presses her lips upon his sunken eyelids with kisses as soft and healing as the flowers of paradise.

"It is coming back. I kept it so long in spite of the whirling goblins and demons who tried to snatch it from me, but when I came to you just now I found that it was gone. Did you take it from me, and give it back to me now?"

"What was it, my darling?"

"Your promise, Perdita."

"What promise, dear?"

"That you would never leave me. Don't you remember saying that?"

"What would you care for me, when you were strong and well?" falters the nurse, with quivering lips.

The sick man tries to set his poor paralysed brain in thinking order at this contingency, but the effort is far beyond him, and he relapses, with an anxious sigh.

"I do not want to drift away and be pushed back into the cruel world I have left," he murmurs earnestly, "and it lies with you to keep me in this pure place. I lost you ages ago, you know; ages ago, when I was pure, and loving as yourself, and see what I am now, for want of you, Perdita."

"You will soon enough beg to part from me again," answers the nurse, turning aside her swimming eyes.

"Must you go, Perdita? after your promise?"

"I must go when I have ceased to make one moment lighter for you. I have promised that I would stay until then."

"Promise it again—you will stay until you cease to be desired by me."

"Until I cease to be required by you," she amends, straining him to her yearning and foreboding heart.

"I shall always require you," says the sick man, with exultation; "I could not take one step in this pure atmosphere without you; oh! you don't know how I shall hold to you, my Perdita!"

So wandering on—dreaming on, he fancies she is his good genius, who was dropped out of his life long ago; that she personates the faith, the hope, the innocence of his early years, ere sin set the searing mark of death upon his heart, and bitter wrongs stole from him his primal purity, and fused in the alembic of burning hatred all noble tendencies into bitter cynicism.

And wandering on, dreaming on, day by day, drifting on from riotous fancy to feeble reason, he comes to know that there is a puzzle in the kindness of this woman, who, morning, noon, and night cares for him, as woman never cared for him before, and grasping the puzzle at last, he looks at it with comprehending eyes.

He will ask this tender, holy-faced watcher by his bedside, why this heavenly care for him; perchance she is repaying some former service of his, done in the days of health; for harsh St. Udo Brand has done his deeds of generous kindness to the widows and orphans of his brave Garibaldians, and forgotten the acts, by scores.

"Lady, why have you been so kind to me?"

"Not kind—only just."

"The service which you thus repay must have been a great one. You have risked your life nursing me through this infectious plague; what have I ever done to you that could merit such repayment?"

She has been fearing these questions for some days, and she has been clinging all the more fondly and passionately to the sweet dream which she has never once in all her passion of unselfish devotion dreamed could last. Again and again she has put aside the cruel end, for oh! she cannot give him up yet—her idol!

By the couch of deadly peril and pain, when his manhood in low beneath the scowl of death, when the divinity of his intellect is swallowed up in frenzy; in his weakness and dependence, the most glorious days of Margaret's life have come to her, gold-tinged, and crowned with joy; the days of her love.

"You are not strong enough for this," she answers, wistfully. "Wait until you are a great deal stronger before you ask questions."

"But"—a bewildered line is knotting the sick man's brow, like the faint ripple on the glassy waters of a stream—"I have seen you before in such different circumstances, and I would like to know where."

"I am Perdita, you know," with an anxious smile. "You met me in your delirium often enough, don't you remember?"

"Yes, yes—was that it? When did you find me?"

"Three weeks ago. You would have died if God had not providentially sent me here in time."

"So strange that you should risk your life for me—a tender lady."

"It was a pleasure to me. I was not afraid of the risk."

"The very physicians fled. We had but few doctors for a fortnight who were brave enough to stay, and we had to take turns and do what we could for each other. It is so strange to wake up from death, and to find a lovely lady at my bedside, and wooing me from my companions' fate with such devotion!"

A lovely lady! How she glows over with surprised blushes and smiles. How she stoops again to catch the feeble accents, and to read the upraised orbs.

"Lovely! Yes, yes. More than lovely; better than beautiful. When I looked up from my dream of death I thought yours the face of an angel. I think so still."

"Hush! hush! If you talk so wildly, I shall think you are wandering again."

"I am not wandering, my Perdita. If ever I do, your beloved hand has but to touch mine and I will come back. Sometimes I have thought of late—"

"Go on, darling. You have thought of late—"

"That you were getting weary of your invalid, and regretted your promise."

"How could you ever think that of me?"

"There. I have to see those gray eyes deepen and flash through generous tears. I will retract that, for I see it is not true."

"Have I ever been forgetful of you?"

"No, no, no. If ever woman had the heart of an angel of mercy, you have one, my Perdita. It was not that you ceased one atom of your wonderful care for me, but lately you have been reserved. You have denied me your hand so often to help me back to myself, or your bosom when my head ached; and the sweet words of endearment rarely come from you, except when once or twice you have thought I was sleeping."

"You are getting so well and strong that you do not require such excessive tenderness. It was only while you were helpless as a child that I felt for you as if you were one."

"You are but a child yourself, my poor, fragile darling; and, yet, child as you are, I do require your motherly care, your motherly words of love. I have had them once, and they were so heavenly sweet that I cannot do without them."

"I will be your mother, then, until you can do without me. I shall take care of my patient until he is able to take care of himself."

"Little mother, why do you weep?"

"Hush, hush! we have talked long enough; go to sleep."

"In your arms, then, Perdita?"

She gathers him to her heart. Recklessly she strains him close, while yet she may, heedless of the lonely days when heart and soul will hunger vainly for this blessed moment.

And so time fares on with this Brand which has been plucked from the burning. Little by little he comes back to life and strength; little by little he spells out this strange, sweet, new life, and analyses it, and basks in its lambent sunshine. Not little by little grows his love for the Perdita of his fever dreams; she has taken the tide when it was at its lowest ebb, and it has swept her into his deep, strong heart, which never more can shut her out.

He watches her beaming eyes with wistful constancy; he clings to her garments; he kisses her light hands, which touch him in gentle ministrations. The hard man is conquered, and by a woman.

But when he grows fearful that, after all, she may be wearying of this toil and care for him; when, with anxious eyes, he looks into the future, and pictures life without this gentle comforter, he almost wishes that health would turn its back on him for ever, so that he might ever have Perdita; and he worries himself into continual fevers, which prove a great drawback to his convalescence.

She, also, has her secret load of anxiety. A crisis is approaching which she may not longer stave off. She must make herself known soon, and finish her duty with regard to him, and go away; and, oh! Heaven knows how she is to turn her back upon this great passion of her life, and him!

In her perfection of humility, she never hopes for reward for these great services of hers; she counts them but a feeble recompense for the evil she has wrought him, which no recompense can atone for. She has not had the vanity to probe into his heart, and weigh his gratitude toward her, or to count upon it for a moment. His daily evidences of love are to her but the wayward fancy of an invalid,

which time and strength will sweep away, as surely as the ripple would blot her reflection from yonder smooth lagoon.

And at last the burden grows so heavy on the heart of each, that he, the least patient, breaks silence, and recklessly puts his hand to the wheel which may revolve and crush him.

"You have always put me off when I was at all inquisitive about you," he says to her, one day; "but since I am getting well so rapidly, I think it time that I should assume a little of the responsibility of my own affairs. I have an appallingly heavy debt of gratitude to pay a kind lady, whose only name to me is 'Perdita,' and I wish to be more particularly acquainted with my deliveress."

"If you would only wait until you were strong enough to travel," answers Margaret, becoming very pale, "it would be far the best."

"Why, where are we to travel, my Perdita?"

"You must prepare your mind for a journey, sir—a journey which will be for your good and happiness."

"With you?"

"Without me."

The disolute tones come quietly enough, but the invalid gives a great start, and clutches at his thin hands, and turns away his face.

Lying so still and so long that she almost thinks him sleeping, she bends timidly over him, and meets his dark eyes full of mournful tears.

"I feared it would come to this," he says, turning almost passionately to her; "and yet I have foolishly and selfishly clung to the hope that you would never seek to leave me. Have I been meddling much with your family duties by this long monopoly of you?"

"I have no family duties to attend to."

"No family ties to break, should I wish, if it were possible, for you to stay with me always?"

"Oh, sir, you would not speak so if you—if I"—and she breaks into a sudden passion of tears.

"My child! oh, my child! I cannot bear to see those tears. If you knew how dear you are to me, you would think well before you cast anything between us."

She buries her face in her hands—for a sacred space her heart throbs in its joy, and she feels that it were well worth the coming years of loneliness to taste the sweet bliss as she tastes it now; and then she meekly looks her situation in the face.

"There are no family ties keeping me from you," she murmurs, as firmly as she may; "but it would not be honourable for me to accept any gratitude from you, or to accede to any such request as you have made, because I did not come here and find you out with any craven hope of reward; I have barely done my duty towards you, and have had no thought of buying your love."

"I do not understand. I love you, Heaven knows, most fervently, my Perdita; but whether you have bought it or not, I cannot say; it is yours, and cannot be recalled."

"And I cannot take it under such circumstances as those in which I won it. When you understand fully your affairs, you will see how mercenary I would be to accept your love now."

"Mercenary? poor child! I offer you this poor, wasted hand, and a broken constitution, and peniless prospects, wherewith to be happy (and it is a part of my native selfishness to imagine that my great love could compensate for all drawbacks), but there is not the smallest possible room for suspecting you of mercenary motives—not the smallest."

"I have heard it said" (this with piteous hesitation) "that Colonel Brand was to be reinstated in his rights, that a great estate in England was going to be offered to him."

The invalid half-raises himself on his elbow, and laughs heartily.

"Dismiss that rumour from your mind," he says, in a relieved tone, "for if that is all the basis you have upon which to found mercenary expectations, it is as slight as the mirage in air. I would not go back to England to meddle with that property if I begged my bread for want of it. I will toady to no woman's wealth."

"But if she didn't wish it," trembled Margaret, "if she insisted on giving it up to you, and rejecting all claim to it?"

"Not she."

"But if she did?"

"I hope she never may. If she did, and if I was ever base enough to accept it, I should have in honour to propose to her by way of gratitude, and because my grandmother's will said so, and I would rather be an organ-grinder, with a monkey tied to my girdle, than be the heir of Castle Brand with Margaret Walsingham for my wife."

"Perhaps you misjudge her. Perhaps she was as unwilling to be the obstacle between you and your property as you were that she should be so."

"You are generous to defend one of the greediest kestrels who ever struck claw into quarry; but you are not just. I have no doubt that if she ever brought herself to try such an experiment as offer-

ing her booty to me, it would be either with the assurance that I would refuse it, or with the hope that common decency would urge me to marry her."

"She would never marry you," is the quiet and sad rejoinder.

"Well, we shan't give her the chance. Let us turn from a very unimportant subject (to my mind) and get over your next objection to me. We have sent the mercenary one a-flying—now for the next."

"That is the only one. Let us leave the subject altogether. You will know more fully what I meant to-morrow."

She leaves him hastily—never without a sweet backward glance before—and he is left alone for hours.

When she returns it is evening, and the long shadows lie athwart the room, and she flits across the gloom to him as if innumerable bars were holding them apart.

But when they are all passed, and she is close by his side, he scans his Perdita's countenance with a conviction growing within him that bars are yet between them which she cannot pass, and he seizes her hand in sudden forbidding.

"What is this, dear child? Why are you so pale and troubled? Have you been weeping?"

"Oh, nothing of consequence! Have you been comfortable?"

"Everything is of consequence which brings these marks of sorrow to my Perdita's face. Who has been vexing you, child?"

"No one—no one, sir."

"Who has been grieving you, then?"

"I—it is no one's fault. I have only been a little foolish—that is all."

She averts her pallid face, and will not be questioned more, but leads him utterly from personal subjects.

She has been dear and kind before, but never precisely with the yearning, smothered passion of this last evening; she almost seems to cling to him, as if invisible hands were driving her away, and her pathetic face grows tremulous at every word of tenderness from him.

And St. Udo has an indistinct memory of burning tears flashing somewhere, while he sleeps, and of soft lips touching his, in one meek kiss, and of tender words of blessing and of prayer; and then a shadow falls upon him, gray and sad, for the door had shut him in, and the girl is gone.

(To be continued.)

THE VEILED LADY.

BY THE

Author of "Fairleigh," "The Rival Sisters," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SINCE that eventful night when the Veiled Lady arose before her vision in all her mysterious grandeur, the heiress had been oppressed by doubts and fears which caused sadness to rest upon her lovely features, and kept her mind in a state of painful excitement. At times she almost believed it to be a creation of her imagination, a dream, but as she thought of the sinister face of John Moran, she knew it was no delusion, but a terrible fact. And she shuddered as she reflected upon her former life, and its trials, when she was in his power, he—a fiend in human shape—and wondered, while her heart seemed to grow cold, if still he held an influence over her. She hoped—prayed fervently that he did not, but was still in tantalising suspense in regard to it.

Miss Angelina had noticed her melancholy, and pondered upon the cause, but arriving at no conclusion which satisfied her inquisitive mind—for curiosity only was the motive of her solicitude—she at last asked her, in very endearing language, the cause, but received only an evasive answer, and one calculated to increase rather than diminish her curiosity, and also to engender a slight feeling of vexation. This as a matter of course she imparted to her bosom friend, Miss Seraphina, and together they held many private consultations concerning it, but obtained no elucidation. However, it served for a little gossip, and that in itself was a sufficient remuneration.

Two morning, and the two ladies and the heiress were, as usual, in the drawing-room.

Miss Angelina had been indulging in vituperative remarks against Mr. Smilessoft, much to the amusement and edification of Miss Seraphina, and to the annoyance and disgust of the heiress, who, however, volunteered no comments, knowing that it would produce ill-feeling, and as that was her home she desired to live there in peace, if not in harmony.

Presently the door opened, and the little servant appeared with a letter which she gave to Miss Angelina, who received it, for a wonder, without scolding the child for some fancied neglect.

The latter, so accustomed to her mistress's peevishness, looked upon her in surprise, and hesitated, as if waiting for the usual exhibition of ill-temper, but, credit to her, she gave none, and the child left the room almost doubting the evidence of her own senses.

It was apparent that Miss Angelina recognised the handwriting, for frowns and smiles passed over her thin features in quick succession, and, breaking the seal, she silently perused it, while her face was one mass of wrinkles—or, begging her pardon—dimples, as she denominated them. At length she placed the missive in her lap, clasped her hands over it, assumed a pensive expression, and with a slight sigh of wonder, said:

"I fear I've done very wrong, Seraphina, dear."

"How, Angelina, dear?" queried her friend, caressing her poodle.

"Why—well—ahem,"—she stopped, looked confused, and dropping her eyes, continued—"Yes, in speaking as I have of our dear friend, Mr. Smilessoft."

The heiress raised her eyebrows inquiringly, and wondered what had so suddenly changed the lady's feelings towards him, who, but a moment previous, she had reviled.

"Why, dear," lisped Miss Seraphina, "has he made reparation?"

"Yes," rejoined Angelina, very complacently smoothing out the letter, "and he has shown to me that he has some good qualities after all."

"Oh, do tell me," pleaded Miss Seraphina, wearily; "you know, dear, how suspense acts on my delicate nerves."

Alice smiled slightly, and mentally queried whether listening jarred Miss Seraphina's nerves more than talking.

"I will tell you, dear," answered Miss Angelina with a gratified smile, "just think—Mr. Smilessoft has invited all of us young ladies to ride with him in an open barouche at the hour of twilight! O won't it be delightful?"

"I thought Mr. Smilessoft's better nature would assert itself," mused Miss Seraphina, gazing into her poodle's eyes, "he was so polite, you know, dear."

"And can such a little thing as this replace a man in your esteem whom you have repeatedly asserted was mean and despicable?" asked Alice, with a faint tinge of contempt in her tone.

For a moment Miss Angelina was disconcerted; then, looking up with a very sanctimonious expression, she replied:

"His repentance has touched my heart, and you know the bible teaches us to forgive."

"Yes," continued Alice, penetrating the shallow disguise, "and it also says, 'Judge not lest ye be judged, for in judging others ye condemn yourselves.'"

Miss Angelina was very angry at being thus defeated, and she hastily returned—though she was sorry for it a moment afterwards, "Mind your own business, Miss Impudence!"

"This language to me, aunt?" and the blue eyes opened very wide, "Do you forget who I am?"

"O forgive me, dear Alice," cried Miss Angelina, arising and throwing her arms about the neck of the heiress; "forgive me, I have a very quick temper."

Although the girl was convinced that her sudden contrition was only a stroke of policy, yet politeness forbade her from expressing her opinion, and, with a faint smile, she responded:

"Certainly, aunt, I thought you did not mean it."

The word "aunt" was very offensive to Miss Angelina, yet she gave no sign of her vexation, but more tenderly continued:

"Mean it? You dear child, of course I did not; you will forgive and kiss me, won't you?"

And the lady pressed her thin lips to the rose-buds held up to her, and then, resuming her seat, turned toward Miss Seraphina, and said:

"What do you think of Mr. Smilessoft's invitation?"

Miss Seraphina sighed, stroked meditatively the only hair of her poodle, and then rejoined with a languid air:

"Really I don't know; Mr. Smilessoft is very kind—ask dear Alice."

Dear Alice, thus referred to, turned her head carelessly, and indifferently answered:

"It is perfectly immaterial to me, I assure you."

"Don't you like to ride, dear," inquired Miss Angelina, with a loving glance. "I should think you would; you have hardly been out since you came."

"I do like to ride," replied the heiress somewhat sarcastically, "but if Mr. Smilessoft is such a man as you say he is, or indeed even a man, for you know you cautioned me against them—then I think I ought to remain at home."

Miss Angelina was silent a full minute ere she could control her resentment sufficiently to reply in a steady voice, when she said:

"I know, dear, but then Seraphina and myself

will be with you, and we will sit on the front seat with Mr. Smilessoft, and you can have the back seat all to yourself."

"How very disinterested and unselfish," thought Alice, and presently returned:

"Thanks. I appreciate your kindness."

"And you will go, dear, won't you?" insisted Miss Angelina, with a pretty and persuasive pout.

"Yes, do, dear Alice," added Miss Seraphina, with an imploring gesture.

"Do you really think it right to ride with a member of the 'worthless sex?'" inquired Alice, determined to annoy them.

Miss Angelina choked down her wrath, and condescendingly responded:

"Yes, dear. We should not be cruel and deprive them of elevating society; it is the only purifier they have."

Alice's lips curled with scorn as she interrogated: "Do you not expect to take pleasure in his society?"

"No!" and Miss Angelina stamped her foot to emphasize her word.

"No!" echoed Miss Seraphina, hugging the sleepy poodle.

"In what do you expect enjoyment, then?"

"Why, hear the dear, innocent child!" exclaimed Miss Angelina, lifting her hands in mingled horror and astonishment. "Why, in the ride, of course!"

"Ah; then, if Mr. Smilessoft should send a carriage with a driver, and stay away himself, it would be preferable, I suppose?"

"Certainly!" assented Miss Angelina.

"Certainly!" lisped Miss Seraphina, with a confirmatory shake of her head.

Alice smiled incredulously, but volunteered no remark.

"Well, dear, shall we go?" persisted Miss Angelina.

"As you say," rejoined Alice, sententiously.

Miss Angelina raised her eyes inquiringly towards her friend.

Miss Seraphina understood the mute appeal, and with a languid gesture, answered:

"Yes, I think so, dear, for it may tend to improve Mr. Smilessoft's nature, and develop his good qualities."

"Yes, dear, you speak truly, we should be charitable, and with that good motive we will go," replied Miss Angelina, though while she was talking she was thinking how pleasant 'twould be to see riding in a barouche with such a fine-looking gentleman as Mr. Smilessoft.

"And what time will he come, dear?" queried Miss Seraphina.

"At seven; just in the cool of the evening, you know—how nice it will be."

And Miss Angelina sighed dreamily.

The heiress felt a strong desire to laugh, but forbore, and instead of that, reflected upon the inconsistency, hypocrisy, and vacillation which the two amiable ladies evinced to such an eminent degree.

The day passed slowly to Alice, not however from any impatience for the hour to come which her companions so much counted on, but in consequence of the monotony and weariness produced by their conversation, the principal topic being—the ride, their dresses, and whether the poodle, otherwise called Fanny, should accompany them.

The latter momentous question had not been decided, and it was already after six.

"What shall I do, dear?" asked Miss Seraphina, with a childish pout, "shall I take Fanny? Oh, dear, I wish you'd tell me."

"I really don't know, dear," returned Miss Angelina, adjusting her collar before the glass; "but it does look rather pretty to see the little dear sitting up in the carriage on its cunning little footsies."

"What?" said the heiress, knitting her brows.

"Feet, then!" snapped Miss Angelina, giving the pink ribbon—all pink—at her throat a vindictive twitch.

"Ah, thank you," responded the heiress, quietly. "I never heard the word before, and only desired to know its signification, that was all."

"Alice, dear, isn't acquainted with your poetical expressions yet, love," remarked Miss Seraphina, casting a compassionate look upon the heiress, and an admiring glance upon her friend; "but she will be soon."

And Miss Seraphina patted the dog's woolly head, and gazed into its half-closed eyes. At length she looked up very suddenly, and exclaimed:

"Oh, I know what I'll do, dear!"

"What, dear?"

Miss Seraphina tripped lightly forward, placed her head very near to Miss Angelina's face, in a manner imitative of an enthusiastic girl in her teens, and simpered:

"I'll ask handsome Mr. Smilessoft to decide about it—what do you suppose he'll say?"

"Oh, I don't know," tittered Miss Angelina, "he thinks so much of you—he'll say 'yes.'"
 "Thinks so much of me!" repeated Miss Seraphina, very demurely; "you don't believe it?"
 "Oh, don't blush, dear," laughed Miss Angelina, "supposing he should offer himself—what would you do then?"

"Oh, my poor nerves," gasped Miss Seraphina, sinking into a chair and trying to appear faint, "don't speak of it, it's so overwhelming."

"And these are man-haters, are they?" thought the heiress. "If they are I should like to see man-worshippers," and glanced half amused, half disgusted, at the would-be youthful looks and airs of the faded ladies.

"How does my bonnet look, Seraphina, dear?"

"Splendid," rejoined Miss Seraphina; "does my shawl hang right, dear?"

"Perfectly lovely," said Miss Angelina, with a sweet little giggle. "But hark—the bell rings! Oh, dear, he's come!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PRESENTLY the door was opened by the little servant; and in white vest and pants, white light overcoat and lavender kids, Mr. Smilesot entered the apartment.

Advancing with his jaunty straw hat waving in his left hand, and his body bending at each alternative step, and smiling from one to the other, went the urbane gentleman, until having arrived at the centre of the group, he paused, and with a bland smile, observed:

"Oh, ladies, you favour me! how beautiful you look!"

"Oh, Mr. Smilesot!" simpered Miss Angelina, casting down her eyes. "You are so kind as to ask us to ride."

"Ah, you honour me," he replied, placing his hand over his heart; "but, believe me, it is you who are generous in accepting."

"Oh, Mr. Smilesot!" tittered Miss Seraphina, interrogatively.

"My dear Miss Seraphina," he answered, bowing.

Miss Seraphina pulled at the corners of her shawl, raised her eyes timidly, lowered them pensively, and after consuming at least three minutes in a continuation of such and similar performances, said:

"I wanted to ask you—Oh dear, I can't say it now," hesitated Miss Seraphina with what she intended for a coquettish glance at the gentleman.

"Why, my dear Miss Seraphina," continued Mr. Smilesot, "what can it be that causes you to hesitate so? Pray proceed."

"Why," returned Miss Seraphina, attempting to blush, "we were talking, just before you came in, about my little dog—dog, and whether I should take her or not, and as we could not decide, I said I would let Mr. Smilesot judge."

"Ah, thank you," responded the gentleman, and approaching a sofa whereon the animal was lying, he took her in his arms, and continued, with a burst of affected fondness, "Oh, you dear little creature, did your mistress say I might decide? Well, you shall go, you beauty."

"What did I tell you, dear?" whispered Miss Angelina.

Miss Seraphina sighed, and turning to Mr. Smilesot, remarked:

"You are very good. I thank you, for I love Fanny very much."

"Happy poodle!" sighed Mr. Smilesot, with a sidelong glance at its mistress.

Miss Seraphina and Angelina exchanged glances which were very significant.

All this time Alice had sat gazing out of the window, and trying to dissipate the annoyance engendered by the silly conversation carried on by two silly women and a man doubly silly. At length it became intolerable, and glancing at her watch, she observed:

"Are you aware, ladies, that you have already detained the gentleman half-an-hour?"

"The spiteful minx!" was Miss Angelina's complimentary thought; but with what she esteemed a sweet smile, she said:

"Pardon us, Mr. Smilesot. Alice, dear, we will go now."

"Oh, Mr. Smilesot," hisped Miss Seraphina, "I fear Fanny is a trouble to you."

"Oh no, no, my dear lady," he rejoined, hugging the poodle. "I delight in such little creatures."

"Oh, you are different from most men."

"I hope I am; I wish I was better," he answered for Mr. Smilesot although seeming foolish, was not a fool by any means, and understood the vulnerable points of his companion's character.

"I don't doubt but that you are," ventured Miss Seraphina, with a blush.

"Dear lady, I thank you," he replied, with a bow and smile.

She merely inclined her head, for now they had arrived at the vehicle.

Miss Angelina experienced a vast deal of satisfaction as she gazed upon the shining carriage, its velvet-covered cushions, and noble bays, and knew that she should feel proud in such an equipage.

"Miss Angelina and Seraphina, please to take the back seat," requested the gentleman, with an affable smile, "for riding backwards might affect your delicate nerves."

Miss Angelina bent her head, and scowled as she thought:

"The artful man! he wants to sit with that magpie!"

The heiress thought she detected a vein of irony in Mr. Smilesot's words, and smiled quietly at the discomfiture of Miss Angelina, though had her taste been consulted, she would have preferred to have sat alone upon the front seat.

The ladies being duly seated, and all necessary attention paid to the comfort of the poodle, Mr. Smilesot entered, assumed his place at the side of the heiress, and the horses started.

Miss Angelina and her companion both endeavoured to disguise the vexation they felt at Mr. Smilesot's arrangement, but it was evident, in spite of their efforts, that their pleasure was marred—and all for a man—ridiculous!

At a rapid rate they sped onwards, and were soon riding in the Park.

"How bright the water is under the last beams of the sun!" remarked Mr. Smilesot. "Isn't it beautiful, Miss Seraphina?"

"Yes, very," mused the lady, with an absent air.

"I believe I have read some poetry upon the subject. What author was it? Oh, I know, 'twas my friend, Miss Angelina."

"What!" and Mr. Smilesot held up both hands in admiration. "My dear Miss Angelina, there was something about you that puzzled me—that is it. How I am honoured in your presence—Pray, who is your publisher?"

Miss Angelina hung her head, looked very modest, cast mildly reproachful glances upon Miss Seraphina, and returned, with a diffident little simper:

"Oh, Mr. Smilesot, take no notice of my friend's words, please."

"Ah, my dear lady," persisted Mr. Smilesot insinuatingly, "truly great people are always modest; pray tell me where I can procure a volume of your poems—do!"

"A-h-em—I—I," stammered Miss Angelina, much confused, and not wishing to admit the real fact, "I hardly know. I tried a few days ago myself, but could not get a volume."

"Really! Is it possible that they sell so fast?" ejaculated Mr. Smilesot in wonder. "Oh, my dear lady, you are favoured, but do tell me at least your *nom de plume*, that I may have the pleasure of reading your next work!"

"Oh, Mr. Smilesot! you are very kind to take so much interest in me!" responded Miss Angelina, determined not to divulge the fact that her scribbles never saw the light; "but you will excuse me if I decline. Some time when you call upon me I will read a new poem to you in manuscript!"

"Believe me, I should be most happy," rejoined Mr. Smilesot, with a gesture indicative of his deep appreciation. "I admire your modesty; it is the inseparable companion of genius!"

Miss Angelina placed her hand on her heart, and bowed very low. In doing so, however, her elbow struck the poodle, and that delectable specimen of the canine race, not relishing that description of caress, showed his repugnance to it by snapping at her, and barking vigorously.

"The horrid, nasty puppy!" exclaimed Miss Angelina, suddenly forgetting the company she was in and her assumed rôle.

"What do you mean, Angelina Wilton?" cried Miss Seraphina, with a quick resentful glance. "I'd thank you not to abuse my dog!"

And while her face reflected indignation, she clasped the animated parcel of curled wool, and soothed its perturbed spirit by various caresses and numerous endearing words.

Alice's blue eyes twinkled with suppressed laughter, and Mr. Smilesot enjoyed the scene in silence.

"Oh! Seraphina, dear, how could you say so?" said Miss Angelina, with a significant glance. "I was frightened for the moment."

Miss Seraphina understood the look, and smilingly answered—

"Of course you were, dear. You will pardon me, dear; Fanny was very naughty."

"Ah, ladies," observed Mr. Smilesot, with a look of calm delight, "what sweet dispositions you are both blessed with; ah! me, it is rarely that I see such."

"Appreciative Mr. Smilesot," sighed Miss Angelina, with a timid glance.

"Appreciative Mr. Smilesot," hisped Miss Seraphina, with a pensive smile.

"Now ladies," remarked the 'appreciative,' "just direct your eyes to the water, and then to the trees beyond—see the reflection of the latter in the smiling surface of the rippling water; isn't the effect delightful?"

"Oh, most bewildering!" replied Miss Angelina, determined to give it the strongest expression she could, whether it was appropriate or not.

"Oh, most entrancing!" murmured Miss Seraphina, thinking she had found a better word, and smiling satisfactorily.

Miss Angelina bit her lip, provoked that her friend had not repeated her phraseology, *verbatim et literatim*.

"Will it not be dark before we can reach home?" said the heiress. "Had we not better return now?"

"The selfish chatterbox," thought Miss Angelina, but merely responded:

"When Mr. Smilesot is ready."

"And I, dear ladies, am prepared to execute your wishes at any moment," rejoined the gentleman obsequiously; "but at this hour, when nature seems to be in the grasp of both day and night, I think it is far more pleasant."

"So do I," assented Miss Angelina, "it seems dreamy-like, and suggests poetic fancies."

"Ah! that is it," commented Mr. Smilesot, with enthusiasm; "you have expressed it exactly. What a wonderful gift you have!"

"Yes, Angelina is bountifully blest," answered Miss Seraphina, casting down her eyes.

"I hope I am not proud of my poetic genius," mused Miss Angelina, with a sanctimonious sigh.

"Oh, no, no!" asserted Mr. Smilesot. "You are the personification of modest worth; and now that I think of the beautiful eglatine, whose language is poetry, I cannot better convey my appreciation than to quote those rich lines from Longfellow."

The land of song within these lilies,
 Watered by living springs;
 The lids of Fancy's sleepless eyes
 Are gates unto that paradise;
 Holy thoughts, like stars arise;
 Its clouds are angel's wings.

"How sweet," sighed Miss Angelina, in a tremor of delight, "and you repeat it finely, Mr. Smilesot!"

"And you repeat it finely, Mr. Smilesot," iterated Miss Seraphina, with a languishing smile.

Alice, who had noticed the growing conceit of the shallow ladies, resolved, from a playful spirit, to pique them a little, and said:

"Your quotation is excellent, Mr. Smilesot, but I remember a verse by Marston, which has been applied to the language of the flower, basil, and is just as appropriate in this case, as the eglatine."

"Indeed; do let us hear it, Miss Alice," he eagerly replied, "would you not be pleased, ladies?"

"Certainly, Mr. Smilesot," returned both, simultaneously.

With a mischievous smile parting her cherry lips, Alice looked up, and slowly repeated:

"Marry! no, faith; husbands are like lots in
 The lottery—you may draw forty blanks,
 Before you find one that has any prize
 In him; a husband generally is
 Careless, domineering thing, that grows like
 Coral; which, as long as it is under water,
 Is soft and tender; but as soon
 As it has got its branch above the waves,
 Is presently hard, and not to be bowed."

Both the ladies shut their teeth together to repress the angry words which arose to their lips, at this poignant thrust at their pet idea, and to conceal their irritation from Mr. Smilesot, tried to smile, but it was a feeble attempt.

"I fear you are unjust," remarked the gentleman, conciliatingly, "or else disposed to be merry."

"The pert little minx," thought Miss Angelina, but in answer to Mr. Smilesot's observation, said:

"Yes, the dear child is very facetious."

"The talkative sauce-box," was Miss Seraphina's mental allusion to the beautiful girl, but with a titting laugh, she added:

"Yes, oh yes, Alice dear is very apt."

Hardly had the words left her lips, when the horses pranced madly, and with a leap which nearly overturned the carriage, they dashed to the side of the road, and continued to rear and plunge, to the imminent peril of those within the vehicle.

"Oh! oh—we shall be killed!" cried Miss Seraphina, hugging her poodle with one hand, and clinging to the side of the barouche with the other.

"What a foolish driver! he'll break our necks!" screamed Miss Angelina.

Somewhat frightened, yet calm, Alice held firmly to her seat, and remained silent.

Another jump by the affrighted animals, and the carriage moved forward and backward, and swayed to the right and left.

Instantly the horses' heads were grasped by an un-

seen hand, the driver pulled from the box and hurled senseless into the road.

"Oh, we shall be murdered! help—help!" shrieked Miss Angelina, her face paling through the rouge.

"Oh, dear—dear! villains—villains!" articulated Miss Seraphina, hardly above a whisper.

"Be quiet, dear ladies," said Mr. Smilesot, with a valiant air, and drawing a pistol from his pocket; "I will protect you with my life! Now rascals, show yourselves, and meet your doom!"

Presently a man appeared at the side of the carriage, muttered a few oaths, and then struck Mr. Smilesot a heavy blow in the chest.

With a spring, and simultaneously discharging his revolver, the latter leaped from the carriage, and closed with his antagonist, while screams loud and shrill went up from the lips of the two ladies, and Alice sat pale with fear, yet wisely silent.

Although Mr. Smilesot was struggling bravely, and appeared to be exerting his whole strength, he was soon overpowered.

"Oh, murder! Oh, murder!" cried Miss Angelina, in a tremulous voice.

"Oh, what shall we do—what shall we do? Help—thieves!" moaned Miss Seraphina, with pallid face.

"Don't make such a fuss—you are safe enough!" sounded a voice in close proximity.

"Oh, bless you, whoever you are!" said both the ladies in a breath.

In a moment the speaker drew near the side of the carriage in which sat Alice, and bending forward, gazed directly into her face.

Horror seemed to stagnate her vital forces, as those features, wreathed in a hideous grin, arose exultingly before her; then, while a cold chill crept over her being, she gasped:

"Again—oh, heaven, again! Oh! why do you pursue me?"

Intimidated, and shaking with affright, the ladies clung to each other, and wept and sobbed alternately.

With quaking heart and agonised mind, the heiress lifted her pale face towards heaven, and in accents of thrilling supplication, cried:

"Oh, Father, again I ask aid! Hear me—hear me!"

"Stop your howling!" commanded Moran, with a revolting curse, and grasping her rudely by the arm, "Come!"

And he threw open the carriage door.

The terrified child hesitated, trembled, and then while throes of mental and physical pain convulsed her mind and heart, and her azure eyes were distended in imploring appeal, she dropped rather than stepped to the ground.

With a sardonic leer curling his thick lips, his steely eye burning with the reflex of his evil thoughts, and his coarse features distorted into a repulsive expression, he glanced with fiendish satisfaction at the grief-stricken girl, whom he had thus made captive.

STONIO.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WE must now return to Prince Enrique, whom we left conversing with Count Pedro and Don Alva in the ante-room of the royal audience hall.

That which he told to the count amounted to this; though he did not relate it as it is here set down:

When, at the dawn of day, the prince galloped away from the shattered carriage, leaving the driver to take care of the senseless footman, he had made his way with all speed to the Ulloa palace, under the belief that Lady Hilda and the supposed secretary of the astronomer had hastened thither.

He had no suspicion that the secretary was the outlawed stone-cutter, and even had he known that, he would have had no suspicion that the proud and high-born Countess de Valveda could go elsewhere than to her guardian's palace.

As he galloped he reflected thus:

"Count Pedro no doubt has enemies among the common people. The three men who halted the carriage in the Alley of Assassins were doubtless three enemies of the count. Petro said they were old men. I have heard that the count is detested by all those who were formerly in the service of the once powerful Villotas, whom the count destroyed many years ago. I have heard that not a few of these old retainers of the Villotas are still to be found in Lisbon. It is to be supposed, therefore, that the three men who stopped the carriage were old Villota servants, burning to avenge the destruction of their former lords. Recognizing the carriage by the Ulloa arms on its panels, and by the livery of its attendants, they imagined the count was in it. In times of great disorder like these, men

will do desperate deeds. Had the count been in the carriage, the three men would undoubtedly have assassinated him,

"But instead of the count, they found Lady Hilda and the secretary of the astronomer. Lady Hilda is beloved by all the common people, because of her generous charities. She was reared in the belief that she was of the common people, and hence her lavish generosity towards such scum. The three men, being of the scum, no doubt were aware of the intended attack of the vagabonds being rallied by Don Alva. It appears they were well acquainted with the secretary. The secretary of a supposed wizard of course has many acquaintances with that class. Petro says they spoke earnestly with each other in a strange language. Petro calls every language strange, as he understands but one—Portuguese. Now it may be that the three men, having learned of the intended attack on the carriage, and aware that it contained not the outlawed stone-cutter, but two persons to whom they were friendly, that is, Lady Hilda and Senor Miguel, hastened to intercept it ere attack would be made upon it—did so, and persuaded Lady Hilda and the secretary to leave it. But however that may be, I shall doubtless find Lady Hilda and Senor Miguel at the Ulloa palace, as they will arrive there soon after I do. I must defer my punishment of the presumptuous secretary until another time."

Arriving at the Ulloa palace, he found the retainers of the royal treasurer armed and guarding it, fearing an attack upon it from the rioters, should the latter rise again.

Rumours were rife that the count had narrowly escaped with his life, after performing prodigies of valour, and his coming was eagerly expected.

Prince Enrique, aware that the count was quietly slumbering in the royal palace, so informed the chief servants of the palace, and enquired for Lady Hilda.

She had not arrived. No one knew anything of her, except that it was reported she was at the house of Senor Dietro Demetrius, when the count had left her about midnight, and that Petro and a carriage had been sent to the royal palace, doubtless that, with an escort of guards, the noble countess should be taken either to the royal palace or to the palace Ulloa.

This was no news to Prince Enrique, and he gave orders that persons should hurry in every direction leading to the Ulloa palace to meet Lady Hilda, who he had no doubt was hurrying thitherward with the secretary of the astronomer.

"I will await her coming here," he said, as he paced to and fro along the great marble piazza.

At the royal palace he had hastily partaken of food and wine, and accustomed as he was to loss of sleep, he felt no fatigue.

Time passed on, the day advancing in cloud, mist, and rain, until more than an hour had passed, and still no tidings of Lady Hilda, nor of the secretary.

Impatient and angry, the prince said:

"I will wait no longer here. I will go to the house of the astronomer. They may have returned thither after leaving the carriage. I wonder I did not think of this before. I should have sent messengers there to inquire. I will now go myself."

Turning upon his heel to leave the piazza, he was met by Captain Joam Britto, who advanced, saying:

"Ah, my lord, how goes it with you?"

"So so, Britto. Have you seen aught of Lady Hilda or the secretary since we parted?"

"Not I, your highness," replied the captain, whose gay uniform and trappings were sadly soiled with blood and hard riding through rain and muddy streets.

"But I have nearly exterminated the thieves. A score or two escaped towards the river, I know, but those who did not find speedy shelter in their dens were cut down. I think we have sabred a hundred and more. My lads made quick work of the scoundrels. Some ten or twelve we hanged, as a warning and others received a variety of punishment. And no tidings of Lady Hilda?"

"None. It is very strange."

"Perhaps the thieves were right after all, my lord."

"In what, captain?"

"In believing that the outlawed stone-cutter, Stonio, was in the carriage disguised as a secretary."

"Nonsense! I know that the man in the carriage was Senor Miguel, for I saw him enter it, I may say."

"It is very mysterious, in my mind at least, how such an impression prevailed. They certainly believed that the stone-cutter was in the carriage, in the disguise of a secretary. How in the name of all that is strange did such a report arise?"

"Well, it is all over now, and the result has been that Lisbon has been greatly benefited in losing many of her villains," said the prince, smiling coldly.

"The report—You can keep a secret, Britto?"

"Did your highness ever suspect Joam Britto of

not keeping any of the many your grace has at various times confided to him?"

"No, or Joam Britto would now be dead," replied the haughty prince, carelessly.

"Aye, for Joam Britto is a fly, a toad in your eyes," thought the captain, with a fierce throb of hate and insulted pride at his heart.

But he showed nothing of his bitter thoughts in his handsome, dissipated face as he bowed and said:

"Stab me as you would a cur, my lord, when your grace finds me betraying one of your secrets."

"Bah! we do not stab curs, Britto. Good steel should not be made to blush with the blood of a cur. Curs, when they annoy us, are knocked on the head. And sometimes we hang them."

"Too noble a fate for the curs, my lord," replied Britto, bowing, and hiding his rage under a smile.

"Ha! You are a worthy fellow, Britto, for all you have small claims to noble blood."

"At least my claims, slight as they are, are legitimate," thought Britto, bowing again.

"A worthy fellow, Britto," continued the prince; "and this secret I hinted at, you shall know."

"Thanks, my lord."

"I hate that Senor Miguel—this secretary of the wizard."

"Good! Count him dead—drowned in the Tagus."

"I gave the fellow some kind of a safe-conduct a few hours since at the wizard's; in truth, I did not read what I signed."

"Perhaps that was rash, my lord."

"Not at all. I am certain it was simply a safe-conduct that he and Lady Hilda should not be molested by the patrols in coming hither. Besides, I have already countermanded the order."

"That is well, my lord."

"The fellow dared escort Lady Hilda after he had heard her reject my presence."

"What boldness! what unmitigated audacity!" cried Britto, clapping his hands and lifting his eyes as if in an ecstasy of indignant amazement.

And then clapping his hand on his sword, he added:

"The base miscreant shall die! Where may I find the presumptuous dog?"

"That is it. Where is he? But I have not told the secret. You wonder how that report arose—that the outlawed stone-cutter was in disguise of a secretary, calling himself Senor Miguel?"

"Aye, it does amaze me, my lord."

"I set it afoot."

"You my lord!"

"Yes; that the thieves or any one might make an end of the secretary, believing him to be the stone-cutter. He would have been slain ere the mistake could be discovered, for, trust me, that secretary will fight if a hand be laid upon him. Alva, but grasped the proud fellow's cloak in the wizard's den, and had like to have had his brains blown out in a second."

"My lord," said Joam, concentrating his gaze upon the face of the prince, "it was an admirable plot."

"True. Pity it failed."

"Yes, my lord, for truly your chance shot hit the centre of the target."

"Explain. I am no guesser of riddles, and am tarrying too long here, when I may find Lady Hilda at the wizard's house, and the vile secretary also. What mean you by your 'chance shot' and 'target centre,' captain?"

"I have cause to suspect that this Senor Miguel and the stone-cutter are the same, my lord."

"Ha!" exclaimed the prince, grasping Britto's arm. "Why so?"

"I saw this Senor Miguel in the observatory of the astronomer, and thought him a hidalgo."

"Aye, the fellow assumes something of a lofty air; and now I remember the stone-cutter did the same at the quarry."

"One of those with me said to me after we quit the house, 'I have a sister in the service of Senor Demetrius, and she gave me yesterday a list of all in his pay. There was no mention of a secretary, nor any one named Senor Miguel. The stone-cutter hath his apartments near the royal palace, and I saw him early this morning. He asked me the nearest way to the marble-yards de Ulloa.' And what of that? I asked. Said my man, a fellow who has oft served as a spy, 'The stone-cutter had a lordly air for a simple artisan, and I studied him, captain.' 'Well.' 'He had a marvellously superb beard, an eye like an eagle's, and a scar on the left temple.' 'Well?' 'The secretary hath been a man of beard, of noble beard, captain. I did mark that he had been recently shaved, after long wearing of beard too, for the skin of his throat and chin and cheeks and above his mouth was nearly as fair as that of a woman, while the rest of his face that could be seen was quite dark. Moreover, though he wore a scholar's velvet cap well pulled down on his

brow I saw that he had a scar on his left temple, captain.' 'And why spoke you not of this when we were in the observatory, man?' 'Oh, finding that we were in the presence of him who is the devil's mesmate, the wizard of Rome, my captain, I had no heart to think of anything but flight.' And now, my lord," continued Britto to the prince, "I was thus conversing with my man, and thinking of returning to the astronomer's, when up rode your highness, bidding me follow you with my troop, as you wished more escort for the carriage of Lady Hilda."

"You said nothing then to me of this—as we hurried to intercept the carriage, captain."

"No my lord, as it was more important that your lordship's command should be obeyed—as Lady Hilda might be in danger—than to speak of the gossip of a fellow who might be mistaken. Besides, if the suspicions of my man were true, I was sure that I could arrest the stone-cutter at any time—"

"And win the reward, eh, Britto?"

"True, my lord. I am not rich, and the three rewards would be acceptable. But as we galloped up to the shattered carriage, and I heard the thieves yelling, 'Death to the stone-cutter!' I imagined he had been in the carriage. From some we caught, and hanged I learned that they had made the attack upon the carriage from a belief that the stone-cutter was in it in the disguise of a secretary, calling himself Senor Miguel. Thus your grace may perceive that, after all, your chance shot hit the centre of the target. The secretary may have been the stone-cutter."

"I begin to believe it," replied the prince. "But we shall soon learn, as I am going at once to the astronomer's. You go with me."

"Of course, my lord, but ere we mount our horses I would say more."

"Speak fast; I would solve this doubt at once. It is very strange that Lady Hilda has not returned to her home, and it will be still more strange if she has gone back to the astronomer's."

"Not at all strange, my lord, though I have not heard where nor why Lady Hilda and Senor Miguel left the carriage."

"They left it in the Alley of Assassins."

"Oh! in the Alley of Assassins, my lord!"

"Yes, the carriage being halted by three old men, evidently well known and friendly to Senor Miguel. That is all that can be learned of the matter. Now, what do you mean by saying it would not be strange if Lady Hilda has returned to the wizard's?"

"I mean that it would not be strange for Lady Hilda to have returned thither with Senor Miguel, if Senor Miguel is Stonio."

"And why not?"

"My lord, the man who saved the life of Lady Hilda at the quarry is the outlawed stone-cutter."

"True; I have heard that."

"And the man who received aid in the observatory from Lady Hilda was the outlawed stone-cutter."

"Yes; I have heard that also."

"And had she dared make me her confidant, my lord, she would have implored me not to be eager in effecting the capture of the stone-cutter."

"Implored you!"

"I know the word is strong, my lord, but it is the correct one. It gleamed in Lady Hilda's eyes as she struggled successfully against her desire to make me her confidant."

"Her confidant? Hound! dare you dream that the affianced wife of Del Lorno could stoop to ask you to be her confidant?"

"I know it would be impossible, my lord; yet a lady in love is ever rash."

"A lady in love! Do you mean that Lady Hilda is in love?" asked the prince, in a cold voice, while his eyes blazed like coals.

"I do, my lord."

"With whom, scoundrel?"

"The right hand of the prince was upon his dagger, his left at the throat of Britto."

"The stone-cutter, my lord."

"Pah!" exclaimed the prince, casting the sycophant from him. "Lady Hilda never saw him until yesterday, and he a low, dust-grimed artisan! You are mad! No more of this to me."

For all his loud scorn the shaft had hit, as Britto knew it would.

"True. I am ever over-zealous in your service, prince," he said. "It was doubtless Lady Hilda's native kindness of heart—her natural gratitude to the stone-cutter for saving her life, that made her bind up his wounds—"

"Ha!"

"My lord, I saw blood-stains on her rich robe, gotten there as she sponged his hurts, holding his head in her arms, no doubt—pressed tenderly, from pure gratitude no doubt—though our high-born ladies will seldom soil a glance of their eyes by letting it rest on one of these vile fellows."

"Ha!"

"My lord, I saw blood-stains on the rich lace of her bodice. The head of the stone-cutter must have rested there—he was wounded in the head. Silva aimed at his head as the fellow sprang into the window of the observatory. Lady Hilda said she aided the man—of course from gratitude only. Certainly she was very eager that he should not be taken—of course from gratitude. First he is at hand to save her life at the quarry—"

"An accident."

"Certainly, an accident. He might have been a thousand miles away, but he wasn't. He was at the quarry, and saved her life. Grant that an accident, since he saved your lordship's also, and not from love. But he rescues Don Alva. There is a mystery, even to Don Alva. Then he rescues Lady Hilda again from the attack of the galley-slaves. No accident in that, though he saved your grace and the count also. He risked his life, so said Silva, and we know it, my lord, not for you—did he?"

"No. I think, in fact I know he hated me."

"True. Why should he risk his life for you, my lord, not knowing you?"

"But he did know me. He addressed me by name."

"Ha! And may he not have known Lady Hilda, who gave him a ring—secretly?"

"Ho! There was a ring given. I had forgotten that. But how knew you that?"

"Silva was at his door, and saw Lady Hilda slip it into the palm of the stone-cutter—of course from gratitude only. Silva told me he thought your grace also detected it."

"Detected it!"

"Silva used that word, my lord."

"Go on. Let's see where you'll end this," said the prince, whose face was pale, and whose eyes were living fires.

"The stone-cutter did not risk his life to save Count Pedro—did he?"

"No; the common people all hate the count."

"True. This valiant stone-cutter risked his life to save Lady Hilda. Then it is said he leads the rioters; then he is forced to find refuge, and he finds it at the astronomer's—a friend of his no doubt. There Lady Hilda aids him. Then he is disguised; his beard shorn off, his garb changed, and he becomes Senor Miguel, whom Lady Hilda gladly accepts as a companion instead of your grace."

"Devils! There must be some truth in all this!"

"They leave in a carriage, laughing at us, at you, at all, and they disappear."

"And who is this accursed stone-cutter—who is he? Whence comes he? He is a stranger in Lisbon. Who is he?"

"My lord, I know not. Silva said he had the air of a prince in disguise."

"A prince in disguise!"

"Aye; or some great lord, used to arms, and of court-like grace. 'He is no common artisan,' said Silva to me, last night. I would Silva were here, that he might speak with your grace of the man who, in the excitement of the struggle at the confectioner's, dropped the rough accent and homely language of an artisan, and spoke like a foreign lord!"

"A foreign lord?"

"Aye, your grace; like an English lord, or an Englishman of rank and education. I would Silva were here. He showed his face at the window of the observatory last night for a moment, asked some question, and then betook himself to his heels as if the evil one was after him."

"Come! we will go at once to the wizard's," cried the prince. "Your troop?"

"Is before the palace, and well-nigh exhausted, my lord."

"I trust they have strength enough left to hang the wizard and his secretary, Britto, if I order so."

"Enough to storm the royal palace, if your highness commands."

"Good! I will remember that, Britto."

"Not to my danger, prince?"

"No; to your advancement—if all things fall out right."

"Ah," thought Britto, with great bitterness, as he and the prince rode away toward that quarter of the city in which was situated the house of the astronomer. "Lady Hilda would not trust me with her secret, and I have either guessed her secret, or invented one for her punishment. This haughty prince will not stoop to make me his confidant in the matter of the suspected revolution. Could I say aught more alluring than I did—that I and my troop would storm even the royal palace at his command? No. And yet he says not, as I suspect he might, 'See here, Joan Britto. I am at the head of a grand plot, with many of the noblest in Portugal, to overturn the throne, be made king myself, and reward my friends, of whom I esteem you the chief.' No; he says coldly, 'Good! I will remember that, Britto.' Ho! he does not trust me, except with his debaucheries."

his secret petty villainies. Come, I shall change all this ere long;" and with a soldier's sharp glance at his troop, and a sly, baleful look at the prince, he rode on.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ARRIVING before the house of the astronomer with Joan Britto and his troop, the prince found his entrance denied by two stout fellows armed with swords and muskets, and wearing the livery he had noticed on Torsa.

"Let me pass," said the prince. "I wish to see the wizard."

"There is no wizard here, senor," replied one of the men, who, like his comrade, was an Italian.

"I mean the astronomer—the man called Dietro Demetrius. Give way, knave."

"Ay, give way," said Britto, who was at the side of the prince. "Give way to his highness, Duke del Lorno."

"Were his highness King José we must deny him admittance."

"Britto," said the prince, with a cold sneer, "we must cut the comb of this mountebank, who gives himself the airs of a noble."

"True. Here, knaves. You see my troop there? Give way on the instant, or be cut as fine as your maccaroni."

"We have strict orders from His Eminence not to admit the Duke del Lorno or any of his friends to-day."

"His Eminence! And who here assumes that title?" demanded the prince.

"I will reply to that question," said a deep, commanding voice within the vestibule, and Dietro Demetrius appeared, in the same garb in which we saw him last, but wearing over it a rich cloak of scarlet velvet, over his shoulders a short purple mantle, on his head a red hat, and in his hand a golden crozier.

Behind him advanced a man bearing a staff, from which hung a banner of silk gorgeously emblazoned with the papal arms.

"I am he who is called His Eminence here," he said, with stern and lofty dignity.

"A prince of the church! A cardinal!" exclaimed Britto, taking off his helmet, and bowing.

"Ay, a cardinal, an ambassador from His Holiness to King José of Portugal. What desires Prince Enrique with me?"

"I little imagined your grace a prince of the church," stammered the amazed prince, staring at the speaker.

"You thought him who is sometimes called Dietro Demetrius, simply a wizard, a mountebank, an adventurer. You erred, prince. What do you desire?"

"Lady Hilda."

"She departed hence hours ago, as you know. She has not returned."

"And your secretary, Senor Miguel?"

"Has not returned, prince."

"My lord," said the prince, haughtily, "it is said that he whom your grace called Senor Miguel is one who led the rioters last night, and that he has another name than Senor Miguel. I mean Stonio the stone-cutter."

"Who says that?" asked Demetrius, calmly.

The prince glanced at Britto, and Britto said:

"At least it is so suspected, my lord."

"Ay, and with cause," said the prince.

"With good cause indeed," replied Demetrius, coldly, "since you, Prince Enrique, and one Diego Alva concocted the report, that the ruffians of Lisbon might destroy Senor Miguel. It was a base and cowardly plot, Enrique del Lorno."

The prince, more amazed than ever, was for a moment speechless with chagrin and surprise; but after a moment of deep silence he exclaimed:

"It is false!"

"Let him and her who accused Prince Enrique stand forth," said Demetrius.

From a crowd of servants who had gathered near, came two, hand in hand, Torsa and Torsetta.

"Within the alley, over there," said Torsa, smiling grimly, as he saw the prince start at his ill-omened appearance, "I and Torsetta, hidden behind the image of St. Peter, heard all that passed between the prince and Diego Alva."

Confronted thus, and detected, the haughty prince changed colour and cast down his eyes.

With stern and severe eloquence, besitting the lofty rank he claimed, the astronomer upbraided the baffled noble in the presence of all there, concluding by saying:

"Now get thee gone, Enrique del Lorno, and hide thyself afar from Lisbon. Let all thy airy dreams, based on a conspiracy we know of, dissolve into air—than which thy hopes are less stable. Relinquish thy desire of being the husband of Lady Hilda, for thou art most unworthy of her. Move not in that matter more, or I, who am a Prince of the Holy

Church, shall whisper into the ears of King José that which shall make thy head lie between thy heels instead of between thy shoulders. Lady Hilda is not within this house, nor do I know where she is, nor Señor Miguel who went with her."

And with a lofty gesture of command, in which was much contempt, the mysterious astronomer dismissed Prince Enrique, and bade those near close his doors for ever against him.

Filled with rage, shame, and chagrin, and no little fear, Prince Enrique, sprang into his saddle again and bade Captain Britto follow him with his troop.

"I must see the king," he thought, as he rode on slowly, regardless of the drenching rain.

"Perhaps it will be best to confess the suspected plot to him. He is my father, and will forgive me, no doubt; at least his anger will be lighter if I confess in private that which my proud cardinal may reveal in public. I can feign repentance, and he will but banish me for a time to the colonies. Who is this cardinal who so suddenly springs up to destroy all my plans? He has not as yet presented himself to the court either as cardinal or ambassador. My father has his mind and heart set upon my marriage with Lady Hilda, and if I confess that certain nobles who hate him have striven to make me their tool in an intended revolution, he may not only forgive all, but have all the more confidence in me. As it is, this unexpected outbreak of the artisans has rendered the revolution unsafe for a time, and as a whisper is already abroad that a great conspiracy exists, some weak-hearted noble—Count Pedro as soon as any—may seek that which I desire—pardon by voluntary confession. I will at once seek the king, and tell him all. He still loves my mother, and for her sake he will forgive me."

Reflecting thus, the alarmed prince had nearly arrived at the royal palace, when Captain Britto spurred up to his side, saying:

"One word, my lord. It is very important."

The prince at once halted, and saw that he and Britto were far in advance of the latter's troop, except one soldier, and a second glance showed that this soldier carried a bundle before him on his saddle.

"Well, Britto. We had a surprise," remarked the prince, bitterly. "Soldiers and princes are no match for priests, especially when the priests are cardinals."

"We may put even cardinals in hot water," replied Britto.

"And an ambassador, Britto."

"Ambassadors have no right to shield outlaws, my lord. This man, your grace, is he who put into my mind the suspicion that Señor Miguel is the leader of the rioters."

"Ah!" said the prince, fixing his gaze upon the soldier. "Your name?"

"Paulo, your Grace, Paulo Salveza, at your service. I was with my captain last night in—"

"Yes. He has told me all that."

"Thanks, my lord. I have a sister in the service of—of—I know not what to call him now, since it seems he is a cardinal."

"No matter. Your sister's name? Your features are familiar to me in the face of some one else."

"That may well be, my lord, since you know my sister by another name. She was, when your grace first noticed her, a dancer at the royal theatre—by name Estella Le Montez."

A deep red flush coloured the dark handsome face of the prince, and he said sharply:

"She had loved before I saw her. Jealous, grasping, and ambitious. We did not agree. What of her?"

"She is still in your service, my lord," replied Paulo, bowing. "That is, she would be. She was present just now when the cardinal, whoever he may be, rebuked your highness. She hurried to her apartment, caught up this bundle, ran out of the house by the rear, and as we rode very slowly, soon came up with us, and gave me this bundle, saying: 'Tell the sweet prince that though he no longer loves me, I send him this that he may know that his enemies are my enemies.' And more she told me, and then hurried away, that her absence from the house should not be remarked."

"What mystery is this? Open the bundle at once."

"Here, my lord?"

"No—let us ride aside behind this wall?"

Britto made a gesture towards his troop, which instantly halted. He and the prince then rode, with Paulo behind a jutting wall, and there Paulo unrolled the mysterious bundle.

"Ha! the very garb the stone-cutter wore yesterday!" exclaimed the prince. "What is this? A letter? No—a passport. Given by the Portuguese minister at the court of Spain to 'Stonio.' No other name."

"Oh, that is the only name the stone-cutter is

known by," said Britto. So it is very well proved that this cardinal is a friend of the outlaw, and that Señor Miguel is the outlaw—in my mind."

"Where found Estella these garments? Ah! what is this in this paper?—hair!"

"Beard, my lord."

"Beard!"

"Of the stone-cutter, and hair of his head."

"Tis full of marble dust."

"Oh, it is plain that the face of Señor Miguel was recently shaved," said Britto.

"Where found Estella these things?"

"She is of most prying nature my lord—"

"You need not tell me that, Paulo."

"True, She is ever on the seach to discover something."

"Very true. Hence she and I could never agree," said the prince.

"Hearing of the arrival of the famous wizard, Demetrius of Rome, my lord, she managed to be employed as a kitchen maid, only to make discoveries."

"What discoveries?"

"Anything, my lord. Wizards are said to have many marvelous secrets. Had my sister been mother Eve, old Adam had never got a bite of the apple. Estella would have eaten the whole of it, and then devoured all on the tree of knowledge of good and evil. She entered the service of the supposed wizard to find out secrets. Not an hour ago she found a secret closet, and in it these things. She has sharp eyes and sharp ears. She has what I have, saving the presence of your grace—shrewd wit. She put this and that together, having heard much that passed, and said, 'Behold whence came that new secretary, of whom I never heard until saw him go forth with Lady Hilda. Come, Señor Miguel is doubtless the stone-cutter about whom there is such a to-do.' And she carried the things to her own apartment, hid them, and awaited the progress of events, like a sensible woman as she is."

"All this she told me in a breath but now, as she clepped the bundle into my hands, with that message which began, 'Tell the sweet prince—'"

"There! Enough of that," interrupted the prince.

"What think you of this, Britto?"

"I think that his Eminence the Cardinal, whoever he may be, has made himself liable to arrest as an aider and abettor of riot, insurrection, and treason, my lord."

"I will consult with the king," said the prince.

"Said Estella anything of this sudden revelation of the astronomer that he was a cardinal?"

"Nothing but that, half-an-hour ago, or so, there was a great hubbub among the servants, of whom there is a score and more, that Señor Demetrius was a cardinal. He has in truth six Italians with him—close-mouthed, reserved, surly fellows, who came with him to Lisbon. She had no time to say more, as she feared her absence might be remarked."

"She shall be rewarded."

"She asks only a return of the favour of your grace."

"I will not forget her, Paulo. Take good care of these articles. They may be worth their bulk in gold to you—and to me, too," added the prince in his mind. "Follow on to the palace, Britto. I must at once have an interview with the king."

We have seen that, as he sought an interview with the king, he encountered Count Pedro and Don Alva.

The consternation of the count and Alva on hearing that the astronomer, whom they believed to be Stephano, outlawed Duke de Villota, was a cardinal, a prince of the church, an ambassador of His Holiness, was great.

Of course the prince was very careful not to reveal to them all that we have made known to the reader. In fact, he confined himself to the mysterious disappearance of Lady Hilda, his belief that Señor Miguel was the outlawed stone-cutter, the discovery that the astronomer was a cardinal, the suspicion that he had abetted the stone-cutter in the riot and in escape, and that he had appeared in Lisbon to prevent the marriage of the prince and Lady Hilda.

"What's to be done?" gasped Count Pedro, amazed at the antagonism of so formidable an adversary as a cardinal of Rome—especially formidable if this cardinal were Stephano Villota, and this mysterious stone-cutter Fernando Villota.

"What is to be done?"

The prince had taken care not to hint that the astronomer had threatened to reveal to the king the conspiracy of which he, Prince Enrique, was chief, and Count Pedro a participator. He feared that, were the cowardly count to learn so much, he would hurry to be the first to betray the conspiracy.

"The first thing to be done," said Alva "is to tell the prince whom we suppose this cardinal astronomer, and this stone-cutter Stonio, to be. You have heard of the Villotas, my lord?"

"I am familiar with the history and fate of that family, Don Alva."

"It may well be so. From your noble mother, my lord, doubtless you have heard of the extinct Villota family?"

"From many, but particularly from my mother, who was well acquainted with the family."

"As indeed she well might be, prince, as your noble mother was once betrothed to Stephano Villota. She preferred the love of the king—"

"Take care, Diego Alva!" exclaimed the prince, haughtily.

"As any noble and sensible lady would," Alva hastened to say.

"Enough. What has this to do with the matter before us? The Villotas are all dead, or Count Pedro would not be so rich."

The count groaned at this.

"It has much to do with the matter before us, my lord," continued Alva, "as we are now sure that two of the Villotas are living."

"This does not concern me."

"The stone-cutter is one of them, my lord."

"Ha! Then the fellow is no base-born cur after all!"

"And the stone-cutter being Fernando de Villota, Marquis de Lota, this cardinal, astronomer, wizard, or whatever he may be, is another Villota—the elder brother of the Marquis, Stephano, Duke de Villota."

"Outlawed!" exclaimed the prince.

"Outlawed in Portugal, my lord. The decree still is in force. Outlawed and accursed!"

"Outlawed and accursed!" repeated the prince with fierce delight, and grasping the hilt of his sword.

"Ay, prince: and all Portuguese subjects, and all good Christians, are, by royal decree and decree ecclesiastical, even of the Holy Tribunal, commanded to slay this same Stephano Villota, as an accursed sorcerer, whenever or wherever he may be found—in field, in house, or in holy church. Nay, more! All who refrain from slaying him or giving him up in bonds to the authority of the Holy Inquisition, shall be deemed accursed, and slain as most criminal malefactors."

The eyes of the vindictive prince glittered with joy, and he exclaimed, as he clapped his hand on Alva's shoulder:

"Man, thou art worth thy weight in gold!"

"But," said the count, with a gloomy shake of his massive head, which caused his fat cheeks to quiver like two jelly-puddings, "he is a prince of the church now! A cardinal!"

"He is in Portugal, not in Rome, my lord."

"How do we know that he has not, through his Holiness, obtained a reversion of the sentence of the Holy Tribunal?" urged the count.

"We are not to imagine such a thing possible, Count Pedro," replied Don Alva, decisively. "We are not to wait until such a fact, if fact it is, shall be made known to us."

"Thou art worth twice thy weight in gold, Alva!" cried the prince, again clapping the superintendent on the shoulder.

"A royal warrant now—" began the count.

"A royal warrant we have," broke in Alva. "It has been standing as a royal decree for twenty-five years. It is among the royal and ecclesiastical archives. Outlawed and accursed, Stephano Villota is to be slain! No mercy is to be shown to him."

"By my life!" cried the prince, "Diego Alva, thou art worth three times thy weight in gold. Let us make an end of the man at once."

"Too hasty! too hasty!" puffed the more cautious count. "He may not be Stephano Villota. Would it not be a pretty affair now, were we to slay a man who is no more Stephano Villota than I am?—nor so much, since the Villotas were my kinsmen."

"Ah!" said the prince, chilled to the bone by these words, "I thought you had no doubt of that, my lord."

"Oh!—really—Santa Maria!—I am not sure. Alva has rather shaken my belief that Stephano died, and—oh! Santa Maria!—he may be alive, and—the fact is I have not yet breakfasted, and the day is well advanced. I am not in a fit state of body to calmly decide upon this important question: Is the astronomer Stephano Villota?"

"That I can swear to," said Diego Alva. "Come; place a hundred of the royal guards at my command, and as I am a living man I will toss the head of this astronomer, cardinal though he be, at your lordship's feet within two hours."

"Boldly spoken," said the prince, who cared not whether the astronomer was a Villota or a peasant, so he were dead.

"I wash my hands of it," said the count. "At least until I shall be assured of two things."

"And what are those two things?" demanded the prince, coldly, though his eyes were all fire. "No matter who the man is, and though he be a cardinal, he is in league with outlaws—he aided the stone-



[THE CARDINAL.]

enter to escape. He has aided in the abduction of a noble lady."

"For all of which, being, as you say, a cardinal and a papal ambassador," replied the count, "he can only be placed under honourable arrest until an investigation shall prove him innocent or guilty. If he be proved guilty, the king, as a good Catholic prince, will not dare do more than compel his instant departure from Portugal. Assure me of two things, however, and for all he be a cardinal, I am with you—that is, after I shall have breakfasted."

"This is no time, my lord," said Alva, anxiously, "to think of eating. What are these two points?"

"First, let me be convinced that the man is Stephano Villota."

"And the second, my lord?"

"I must know that the decree of outlawry and sentence of death, and all other judgments against Stephano Villota, have not been secretly annulled."

"The last it will be well to learn first," said Alva, at once recognising the prudence of the count. "You, Count Pedro, must see the king, and learn whether the royal decree has been reversed. The king may have privately granted a pardon to Stephano Villota, since the latter has dared to return to Lisbon. I will see the secretary of the Holy Tribunal, and speedily learn if anything has been done by that body."

"Let the prince see the king," growled the old count. "I have not breakfasted. I lost my supper last night. I am as famished, Santa Maria! as a beggar. See the king; see the secretary of the Holy Tribunal; then come to my palace. I leave it all to you, Alva, all to your discretion;" and with these words the noble glutton hurried away, his hunger being far more powerful than his fears, his cares, or anything else—apparently.

We say apparently, for Count Pedro was as cunning and prudent as he was corpulent. He wished the whole matter to fall on any shoulders than his. He knew that there was no danger before him if the astronomer was not Stephano Villota; and he knew that if the astronomer was Stephano Villota, Diego Alva would move heaven and earth to destroy him.

He was well assured, too, that the sentence and decrees against the Villotas could not have been molested without his knowledge.

As for Lady Hilda, he dismissed her from his mind. If she wedded contrary to his will, or fled from his authority, the Montredoras estates would revert to him.

He had recovered from his surprise and his fears.

It was scarcely probable that the astronomer was Stephano Villota, and if he was—Ha! the man was an outlaw, and Diego Alva would attend to him; Diego Alva and Prince Enrique.

So the corpulent old count, with a tremendous appetite, waddled to the palace plaza, and finding a carriage, was rolled away to his home, thinking only of his breakfast, so long delayed.

"The fat coward," muttered Alva, as the count departed.

"Prince, I pray you see the king speedily."

"I will. Meet me here. I will await you if I return first. Do you, on the other hand, await me."

"As your grace commands," replied Alva, and he and the prince left the apartment in different directions.

The prince found it not at all easy to gain access to the king. The private royal apartments, in a distant quarter of the great palace, were, with all their approaches, carefully guarded by armed sentinels, and others were being rapidly posted by their officers. Even the prince was denied a passage to the presence of terrified royalty.

"A great alarm for a mere riot," said the prince to an officer.

"It is rumoured that a great conspiracy has been detected, my lord."

The heart of the guilty prince sprang almost into his mouth.

"A great conspiracy! Impossible! Everyone loves King José."

The chamberlain shrugged his shoulders and bowed, saying:

"Oh, there were rumours of a great plot last night, my lord."

"Very true. I heard something of the kind," remarked the prince, carelessly. "But such reports, ever amounting to nothing, are ever flying about. Mere rumour—lies."

"So we all thought, my lord, though the king and his council deemed it well to doubly guard the palace without."

"True; but it appears that the palace is now being guarded within."

"Yes, my lord."

"And how long since this strange precaution began?"

"Oh, but a few minutes, my lord. Soon after your entrance—"

"Ah, my entrance was noticed?" interrupted the prince, ready to take any alarm.

"By me, my lord. I was by chance in the audience room of the palace at the time."

"Oh, yes. Well?"

"Soon after the entrance of your grace—your grace went so fast that I had not time to inform your highness no audience was to be given by his majesty in the great hall to-day—soon after the entrance of your grace—"

"Well, well! Old man, you drag your words as if each was a fish-hook in your gullet!" exclaimed the prince, impatiently. "What happened soon after I entered?"

"Why, your grace, I was moving away to another quarter, with that slow and dignified step said to be peculiar to me—in this style, your grace—ahem!" and the pompous old chamberlain began to pace in a manner most loftily absurd, when the prince seized him by his gold chain of office, and dragging him towards him, said angrily:

"The fiend take thy slow and dignified step, old fool! What happened as you paced?"

"Oh! how impatient is youth!" exclaimed the half-choked chamberlain. "Well, youth is excusable, being ever foolish. As I paced, as I said—ugh, ugh!"—and here the old fellow had a fearful fit of coughing, during which the prince stood on thorns.

"Well, well! As you paced? What then? What then?"

"St. Jago! Never did I see your highness so excited," said the chamberlain, with a stare.

"Ah! I am—you must know—alarmed for the—yes. Well you paced, Curse thy white beard, chamberlain! If thou didst pace as slowly as thou speakest—Well? well? you paced?"

"True, in my slow and dignified way—the style said to be peculiarly my own, my lord."

"Aye—all thy own!"

"When a hand was laid upon my shoulder! I turned; in my slow and dignified way—a way peculiar to me, your grace—indeed thus;" and the prolix old babler turned his head in a most owl-like manner over his shoulder. "Aye—thus, my lord."

"True. Well?"

"And I beheld—the devil!"

"The devil!"

"Or worse, your grace. I mean Torsa."

"Torsa?"

"Yes, my lord; and thereupon did I forget my years, my rank, my dignity, and everything peculiarly my own, and with a kind of howl, betake myself to my heels!"

"Torsa!" muttered the appalled prince. "I left him at the house of that man! Ah! I am lost!"

(To be continued.)



[THE COMPACT.]

MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

CHAPTER I.

Whose face her bridegroom hath not seen,
Who hath not golden wedding-ring,
Twixt wifehood and her bridal day
Death lurketh all the treacherous way.

THERE are comparatively few in these days to whom it is given to behold a genuine steeplechase.

The audacious girl, who, in almost open defiance of parental authority, had come out to behold this one, if not fully conscious of the rare privilege she was about to enjoy, was enough so to fill her superb eyes with liquid glory, and curve her rich scarlet lips into breathless smiles that it was contagion only to see.

"There, Herbert," she cried, "it is the starting signal. I told you we should be in time."

She flung a resplendent glance at the groom, an old man, whose eager face, however, almost reflected her own passionate enthusiasm, as the clear silver note of the bugle rang out its sweetness across the mingled stretch of wood and dale below.

At the same instant half-a-dozen red coats flashed out of a green spot of the picture, and took the field at various paces, most of them of that reckless, headlong style, that if it does not end in broken necks, owes the escape to luck rather than skill, though I know there are plenty of people who would say to the contrary.

The young girl who was watching them, was evidently one of those daring impetuous creatures, who would willingly have sacrificed the very jewels she wore, to have participated in that mad, tearing race for broken heads and dislocated limbs. She sat her tall, milk-white thorough-bred as though she could do it, too—like a born princess of the turf.

Rarely, indeed, would you have seen a face of such vivid beauty, a form of such youthful perfection.

She wore a crimson velvet riding-habit, which fitted her lithe, young shape like a glove, and was fastened with buttons of pure gold. Above her long, streaming, blue-black curls, a crimson velvet cap was set jauntily, the snow-white plume of which was clasped with a single large diamond, of such fine water, that it burned like a miniature sun with every swift, restless movement to and fro.

The lovely equestrian now snatching the gold-mounted lorgnette which hung at her belt, and again

dropping it, to try her own bird-like clearness of vision.

The groom watched her with mingled pride and anxiety.

Lord Eaglescliffe, since he could not accompany his spoiled little girl to witness this "run" of a lot of crazy young fellows from a squadron of light cavalry, quartered near, did well to object to her going at all; but would have done better, if he had seen his wishes enforced, instead of trusting their fulfilment to the inclinations of the self-willed, motherless little despot of the Cliffe, who, he ought to have known, could twist any servitor of his lordship about her small finger, his orders to the contrary notwithstanding.

"Black leads—no, gray is ahead!" cried the girl, her splendid eyes flashing. "There! The chesnut is down, and here goes the bay, too. That fellow don't know how to ride, Herbert. Look at him gripping the reins as though they were driving posts!" and her laugh rang out musical and mocking. "I'd give all the world to head such a chase as that. Poo! there isn't one of them can ride as I can. Huzza! did you see that? How the black took that gate? But the gray's ahead yet, Herbert," with a sly glance at the old man. "I'm going to try it, just as soon as they are out of the way!"

"My lady!" exclaimed the groom.

My lady laughed at his horror-stricken face, and set her wilful lips.

"Heaven's mercy," muttered the poor old man as he caught that expression, "it would just be one of her tricks," and he urged his horse nearer the mischievous girl.

The animal the groom rode was a magnificent blue roan, clean-limbed and swift.

He glanced down at him anxiously, and then upward at the lurking fire in my lady's black eyes.

"She means to do it," he thought, with a groan.

My lady turned toward him suddenly, her saucy face changing all in a moment to nearly piteous entreaty.

"There isn't one bit of danger," she said, plaintively; "you know there isn't for me!"

Herbert hesitated, not that he had any notion of consenting, but that face, and those melting tones were hard to resist.

"I dar'n't do it, Lady Violet," he said, shaking his head. "It would be more than his lordship would ever forgive."

My lady drooped her head a moment thoughtfully.

"I think it would," she answered, gravely; "for that very reason, I shall take all the responsibility on myself. Come along, Herbert." And laughingly deaf to his half-groaning remonstrances, she pro-

ceeded to descend the hill by a partly circuitous, easy route.

"If you should meet any of those roystering military fellows, my lady."

"But I shan't, they'll be miles away before we get there."

"If you'd only wait till to-morrow, then!"

The wilful girl only pursed her scarlet lips and rode on, the groom following in mute anguish.

Long before they reached the "start," they saw the horsemen coming flying on the return course—what was left of them, that is. Four had fallen by the way, and the black and gray, still in lead, looked worn out. The first touched the top rail of the last fence with every hoof he had, and went down on his head, his neck broken, and his rider a crumpled heap under him as he rolled over.

The gray was more fortunate, taking the leap like a bird, and winning the day by so much.

From a safe screen of thick trees Lady Violet and the groom saw all.

The glass dropped from my lady's hand with a crash.

"I am afraid some one is killed," she said in a low voice, her lips blanching; "ride on, Herbert, and see if you can be of any assistance."

"Not for ten dead men!" said the old man firmly.

"His lordship—"

"There!" interrupted the young girl, lifting her little gauntleted hand with a haughty gesture. "The life of a fellow creature may this moment be hanging upon our lingering." As she spoke, she swept forward at a pace that even the winning gray might have found it hard to match.

The unfortunate groom had no choice but to follow.

"It will be the worst piece of work I ever did yet," he groaned; and he was right. "I've fought the ground inch by inch. She'd have left the Cliffe alone if I hadn't agreed to come with her."

The rider of the gray before mentioned, had dismounted and was trying to assist his fallen comrade, who still breathed, at all events, though he could not stir for the carcass of the gallant black which crushed his lower limbs. He looked up with a start and an exclamation at the resplendent apparition that came dashing to the rescue. His cap swept the ground at sight of the vivid young face.

"Is your friend much hurt?" asked the musical voice of Lady Violet.

The roan was at her side as she spoke, and with Herbert's assistance the fallen man was at last dragged from under the body of his dead horse. How seriously he was injured it was impossible to tell. He had fainted as they moved him.

Lady Violet looking down at his unconscious, singularly handsome face, set in tumbled masses of richly curling hair, was conscious of a strange thrill, a premonition, perhaps it was, of the influence this darkly handsome face was to have on her future destiny.

"He will have to be taken to the Cliffe," she spoke, presently, to the young fellow who had won the steep-chase by such odds. "I will ride forward, and send some of our people to your assistance."

The young man stepped towards her, saying in a grateful voice:

"You are very kind."

Poor old Herbert could only stare with eyes of mute deprecation, and mutter. What my lord, her father, would say to such proceedings as this was a somewhat anxious question. But it could not be helped now, and as he caught sight of some half-dozen of the lookers-on hastening towards them, Herbert said respectfully to the young man:

"I'll ride with my young lady, if you please, sir."

The other answered, with slight irritation as he glanced of the fallen man:

"I'll stay here till you can send some one, if you will. The gentleman is nearly as much a stranger to me as to you, my good fellow. He is not one of us. He only offered to ride the black, seeing there was nobody else. Huntingdon was to have done it, but he's down with a fever."

The groom merely bowed, and departed after his fast-receding mistress. Lord Eaglescliffe had gone up to London for a few days. He found the stranger, whose name was Conway, quite domesticated at the Cliffe on his return—no bones broken, but some severe contusions—and looking exceedingly interesting with his pallid face and great dark eyes, which were capable of assuming any expression their owner chose.

"I don't like him," thought his lordship, emphatically, though for his life he could not have told what there was to object to, unless it was his good looks.

Miss Lyle, who was a sort of companion and female mentor to Violet, a distant cousin, too, had discovered in the invalid an old acquaintance of her own, though she was wonderfully chary of particulars, and displayed a singular emotion when the earl approached her on the subject.

As for Lady Violet, she accepted that reproof which her father thought proper to administer for her disobedience, with such unparalleled meekness, and declared she hated the handsome invalid in such unmeasured terms that her father was pacified.

"For once the luck's on my side," muttered the stranger, as he furtively watched the brilliant little face of his haughty young hostess. "If I let this chance go by unimproved, my name is not Vane Conway. Patience, Vane," patting his own shoulder, after a fashion he had; "it's a long road that has no turning."

Meanwhile it was Miss Lyle who officiated mostly in the capacity of entertainer in the sick room. The handsome invalid frowned darkly enough sometimes at this state of things, but made the most of any chance opportunity to drop a subtle word in the delicate, proud ear of my lady. It was usually a word that transfigured that exquisite face wonderfully too. Between times, not to be idle, he flattered Miss Lyle, who was handsome, too, in her way—more so when Conway's rich tones were vibrating in her fascinated ear, his white, smooth fingers interlacing her own.

As Conway grew better, and by degrees quitted his room, in an imperceptible manner he and Lady Violet drifted together more and more frequently.

He quitted the Cliffe in time with many thanks for its hospitalities, but he only went as far as Chester, and rode over from there three or four times a week, ostensibly to see Eleanor Lyle, till Lord Eaglescliffe discovered what he was really about, and put a summary stop to it.

CHAPTER II.

THE wild March day had nearly spent itself. It was closing in fast now, damp and chilly, as Eleanor Lyle, lingering in the park shrubbery, turned once more an anxious, angry look upon the face of her companion. She was a very striking-looking woman, tall, finely formed, with a good complexion and well-cut features. It was, perhaps, the contrast of her heavy black hair, with the large, black-lashed, light-gray eyes which arrested the attention so. It was Vane Conway she addressed, speaking in a voice husky as it was decided.

"There is no use, as you say, in going over all that ground again. I only wanted you to know I had not forgotten; to understand that if you are playing off and on with me now as you did then, you are trifling with a dangerous woman. Deceive me now, and you walk straight to your own ruin, if I can accomplish it."

Conway stood pulling at his long beard, his brow darkening—a wonderfully handsome man, and a wonderfully wicked-looking one at this moment.

"I presume you have no objection to my stating the case as it stands," Eleanor went on in the same tone. "You have had the audacity, after all that has gone before, after serving me as you would not dare serve your valet, if you had one, you have had the audacity to make me the following proposition: I am to go up to London to an address you have given me, and call on Miss Grace Elroy. That is the name, is it not?"

Conway nodded.

"I am to present Miss Elroy your note, and I am to present myself as the person mentioned in that note, who is to conduct her to a church in the suburbs of London, where you will await us, the 12th of April, at ten o'clock in the evening. That is correct so far?"

Conway nodded again, scowling all the time—an expression that detracted from his good looks, but added immensely to his bad ones.

"I am to see that Miss Elroy is so muffled, veiled and disguised generally, by a mask in particular, that you would not know her yourself, and I am to stand ready to assist you in any little bye-play at the church, to keep Miss Elroy from discovering she is not marrying you, and your friend from finding out he is marrying Miss Elroy. Is that correctly stated?"

"Yes," shortly, and tossing his long black hair out of his eyes, with a defiant movement that would have told anyone who knew him, that whatever deceptions, subterfuges or conspiracies, he might have resorted to in the past, he had never attempted anything so daring and infamous as that which he had now in contemplation, and to which, as Miss Lyle said, he had had the audacity to ask her to lend a helping hand.

"If all goes well," went on Eleanor, without noticing his black looks, "our marriage, yours and mine, is to follow, within six months after. Is that the agreement or not?"

"That is the agreement. How many times do you want me to say it?" he asked, sulkily.

"That will do. Now repeat to me what you said of the man you are going to impose on Miss Elroy as yourself."

"What is that for?"

"For my own satisfaction. I don't care how much you cheat him; he is a man, and an idiot, or he wouldn't be so easily fooled, but Grace Elroy is a woman like myself. I won't help you to marry her to a villain."

"I told you he was a gentleman."

"Yes, and heir to an old title. I only wanted to make sure I had understood you correctly. Is that true? He will be a titled gentleman some day."

"If he lives he will," with an involuntary emphasis on one word that made Eleanor look at him a second time before she spoke again. "Well?" Conway questioned, after some moments' silence.

"I consent," she whispered, "because I believe in spite of all you do love me, and will keep faith with me."

"You're a good girl, Eleanor, and I will keep faith with you; I swear it."

She lifted her head, listening.

"There, kiss me, and let me go. I think I hear some one."

She put up her face, and the caress with which he answered her was certainly not a cold one.

Returning hurriedly towards the house, she was met by Lady Violet, and a little after overtaken by Lord Eaglescliffe.

She glanced at the latter anxiously, for he came from the direction in which Conway had departed. But he was regarding his daughter with a stern, inquiring glance, and she in turn averted her face from him.

"If he saw Conway," thought Eleanor, "he thinks we have both been to meet him."

Among all the stately homes of England, there are few of more imposing aspect, or more remarkable for architectural beauty, than Eaglescliffe; and the mansion is as celebrated for the perfection and magnificence of its inner appointments.

The three entered by the conservatories, superb winter gardens, whose delicious atmosphere, and wonderful tropic splendours, would almost have persuaded one that he had suddenly been wafted to the vicinity of the equator. The earl paused in the library, a spacious, elegant apartment, with deep, ruby-tinted walls, ruby curtains at the book shelves and windows, the same warm colour in the velvet-covered floor and furniture, and in appropriate niches here and there, a rare statuette gleaming out of the rich dusk.

His lordship's face was overcast. He had seen Mr. Conway stealing away, as he supposed, from his interview with the two girls, and had waited to calm his face before he joined them.

"Sharp remedies," he muttered, as he paced the luxurious room. "It must come to that soon or late," and with sudden decision he reached the silken bell-rope.

"Ask Lady Violet to join me here," he said to the servant who answered the summons.

He waited with singular nervousness while the man was gone, but his look hardened suddenly as the door flashed wide again and his daughter swept in, her dark eyes filled with something more than their usual proud light. She had discovered that Conway—her guest she considered him—had been prohibited from visiting at the Cliffe any more—this, without a word to her—and she was feeling bitterly resentful in consequence.

She was only fifteen, and lacked something of the stature of that glorious womanhood which was yet to be hers.

But as she swept into the handsome room, her rich dress falling in amber folds about her—for her father's summons had found her at her toilette—there seemed no type too gorgeous for comparison with her superb young beauty.

The earl almost groaned as he looked at her, and thought that almost for the first time in her life, he was about to address harsh words to her. Only the conviction that it was necessary, enabled him to harden his heart.

"Did you send for me, papa?" asked the spirited young voice.

The earl altered his position so that the light from the chandelier fell upon his stern, white face.

His voice was slightly tremulous at first, but grew firm and bitter.

"I sent for you," he said, "to say that the man who has been vouchsafed our hospitalities only to turn like the warmed viper and sting the bosom that cherished him, is a villain, who cannot be permitted to hold clandestine interviews with the future Countess of Eaglescliffe. I must say also, Violet, that I expected better things of you, than to steal out from your father's roof to a secret meeting."

The young girl lifted her eyes slowly, her bewilderment struggling with her excitement. Her face was deathly white.

"In his name the future Countess of Eaglescliffe thanks you."

She bent her stately little head as royally as though she had not just been guilty of impertinence. Lord Eaglescliffe caught his breath slightly, but he did not speak.

"Is there anything more, papa?" pursued Lady Violet.

"Nothing."

He could not trust himself for more.

But, as she quitted the room, he rang the bell again sharply, and sent for Miss Lyle. She was in Lady Violet's apartments when the summons came, and my lady, far from cool yet, said:

"Come back here, Eleanor; afterwards, I have something to say to you."

Eleanor departed, and the spoiled girl remained to pace her elegant boudoir, chafing with impatience, like an angry and outraged young queen.

The apartments of Lady Violet were amongst the handsomest the stately mansion could boast. Every detail that Lord Eaglescliffe could imagine, either for luxury, comfort, or adornment, had been lavishly supplied. The boudoir was furnished in scarlet and white; the dressing-room in white; the bedroom in blue and white; and the marble bathroom was tinted like the sea, and presided over by marble naiads and sea-nymphs, sculptured by master-hands. From the boudoir opened a miniature conservatory of the most exquisite and delicately scented tropical plants, among which a few birds of rare song and plumage hung in gilded cages.

Folding doors of plate glass separated the conservatory from the other rooms, and the musical tinkle of a fountain was faintly audible even when these were closed.

It was half-an-hour before Eleanor returned.

"How could you permit your father to suppose you had been out to a secret interview with Mr. Conway?" she asked reproachfully of Lady Violet; "fortunately I know to the contrary."

"He assumed that it was so; it was not my business to correct him," replied my lady. "How did you happen to know to the contrary?"

"Because," Eleanor replied, with heightened colour, "I had just parted from Mr. Conway myself, when your father met him."

A singular emotion and surprise struggled in the vivid young face.

"Eleanor, what is Mr. Conway to you?" she demanded, suddenly.

Eleanor's colour deepened. She dared not tell the truth, so she said, evasively:

"Why should he be any more to me than to you?"

"If he were as much, he would be the villain papa called him just now," my lady answered, with a faint, strange smile.

"I will tell you what he is to me," she continued, her velvet cheeks glowing, her eyes softening with liquid light, "he is the life of my heart, the glory of my life, the treasure of my soul. I would rather be his wife than Countess of Eaglescliffe, with gold, and diamonds, and palaces at command. There, my dear, have you orders to report to papa?" she concluded, in a sarcastic voice, but a glow of rapture lingering in her splendid eyes.

Eleanor's wild, eager glance dropped, her lips moved slightly.

"May Heaven have mercy upon us all! Has it gone so far as this?" she murmured.

In spite of the efforts of all three, they were a constrained party who gathered in the brilliant dining-room, and sat down to the table flashing with gold and silver plate, and set with the most delicate viands of the season.

Lady Violet was indeed the most radiant and talkative of all. But through even her gaiety ran a vein of chilliness, and Eleanor, as she furtively glanced at her strangely luminous eyes, said to herself ominously:

"If I thought he meant to play me false after all, I would match him at his own game. I could do it, and I would. I warned him."

"Yes, I have promised to marry Mr. Conway, and I shall keep my word," Lady Violet acknowledged frankly to Eleanor that evening. "You may tell papa if you like, I don't forbid you. But you'll only muddle matters if you do, and I don't suppose you want papa and me to quarrel, really and desperately, as we should in that case. We are to be married privately, and papa is to know nothing about it for the present. Mr. Conway will go his way into the world; I shall stay here as usual, and be as good as I know how to be till papa consents out of sheer admiration for my goodness and Vane's patience."

"He had better have been sure he was off with the old love before he was on with the new," mused Eleanor Lyle, darkly, as she left my lady. "He has chosen to play a desperate game with me. Let him look out now."

She could have hugged herself now for that knowledge of his plans, which Vane Conway had so recently imparted to her.

"I should deserve to be served as he means to serve me, if I did not turn upon himself the weapons he has placed in my hands," she pursued. "If after this, he marries Lady Violet, it will be my own fault."

In a spacious and elegant morning room at Eaglescliffe, sat the earl, the Lady Violet, and Miss Lyle, at breakfast, a week later, when the letter-bag was brought in. Lord Eaglescliffe glanced at the superscriptions of his letters carelessly, and stopped at one with a startled look, before he tore it open. He grew visibly pale as he read, and at the end spoke hurriedly to the man in waiting:

"Seever, send some one round to the stables to tell them I want to start for Chester in half-an-hour."

"Papa," exclaimed Lady Violet, as the man quitted the room, "you are not going to London?"

"Yes," spoke the earl, rising from the table. His voice shook slightly.

"Has anything happened?"

Without answering her, he quitted the room.

"Stay here—don't go after him," said Eleanor Lyle, as Lady Violet rose also. "His absence will be very opportune for us," she added, in a significant tone.

Lady Violet turned swiftly, a lovely carmine dyeing her face.

"Have you heard from Mr. Conway?" she demanded, rather nervously.

"Yes—and most fortunately, he names the twelfth of April."

"Why, that is to-morrow!" exclaimed Lady Violet, growing as white as she was red before.

"It is very fortunate that Lord Eaglescliffe is summoned away just at this time. I don't know how we should have managed else," remarked Eleanor, affecting not to notice the other's agitation.

Lady Violet made no reply, only to dart from the room, and Eleanor smiled faintly as she heard the clicking heels of her little slippers crossing a marble corridor which led directly to the earl's apartments.

"She is going to make one more effort to move him," she murmured; "but she will not succeed."

Miss Lyle was right.

Lady Violet found her father, having hastily donned a travelling-suit, giving some hurried instructions to his valet.

She hung about, irresolute, anxious, the colour coming and going in rich waves over her face.

At last the man quitted the room for a moment, and she advanced.

"Papa," she asked, with rare humility, "won't you tell me why you don't like Mr. Conway?"

Lord Eaglescliffe had the lid of his dispatch-box in his hand. It fell with a crash, and he turned to look at her, startled as she had seldom seen him.

"I thought you and I had sufficiently discussed that subject," he said, sternly. "At all events I cannot stay to talk of it now."

Lady Violet's white teeth were bedded in her scarlet under lip, and her breath came short and quick.

"Is your dislike of him quite insurmountable?"

"Quite," he answered, regarding her with a sort of angry pain. Then he added: "I have seldom laid any commands upon you, Violet; but something tells me that that villain will try to see you during my absence. I forbid you to receive him;

and if I thought there was really danger that you would disobey me, you should be locked in your own apartments until my return."

The heart of the wayward girl had been soft a moment before. It grew hard now, in an instant.

"It would be much safer to lock me up," she cried, and swept out of the room.

Miss Lyle and she were both in the breakfast room as the earl passed out. He stopped a moment and spoke to Eleanor, repeating in effect what he had just said to Violet.

My lady interrupted him with slight mockery and more anger.

"In short, papa," she said, "Eleanor is put in command during your absence. I wish her joy of the undertaking."

Lord Eaglescliffe stayed yet a moment, regarding his daughter with mingled displeasure and tenderness, as he extended his arms.

"Good-bye," he said; "who knows what may happen before we meet again?"

Afterwards Lady Violet knew what he was thinking of when he put the supposition. Now, with a sudden swelling of the heart, she thought only of the rash venture she purposed to make while he was gone, and threw herself into his arms, with a burst of passionate weeping.

The earl took a heavy heart with him to London, but he brought a heavier one back.

"Well," questioned Eleanor, with slight sarcasm, when she and Violet were once more alone. "I judge papa carries the day. Poor Conway!"

Lady Violet turned upon her, her eyes darkening with anger.

"You will be good enough not to speak of Lord Eaglescliffe in that voice, Eleanor; as for the other, I don't make promises one day, to break them the next."

Both the estates and title of Eaglescliffe descended in the female line, so that besides some two hundred and fifty thousand pounds left her by an uncle on her mother's side, Lady Violet would one day possess the vast Eaglescliffe revenues, and be the sole representative of one of the oldest titles in the English peerage.

A quarter of a million pounds in her own right, and Countess of Eaglescliffe some day in spite of the fates," Conway had said to himself something like a thousand times since he had become conversant with the facts.

Grandeur enough it was to have turned an older and wiser head, and this little spoiled girl had not escaped the penalty of her position. She was an embodiment of extremes—the most wayward, capricious, and exacting of creatures, and at the same time, the most affectionate, devoted and generous, so that, with all her faults, she was adored alike by father, friend, and dependent.

Eleanor Lyle was a distant cousin of the family, poor enough to be more than thankful for the generous and luxurious home the earl gave her, as companion and friend to his spoiled darling. Comment on her course under these circumstances, is, perhaps, needless. But the reader may have a glimpse before this chronicle is ended, of the woman she was before her love for a bad man poisoned the very springs of her life.

CHAPTER III.

It was April by the calendar, but it was March weather still, this twelfth day of the month—as bitter, bad weather as ever blew at that tempestuous season. It began to rain on the eleventh some hours before the departure of Eleanor and Lady Violet from the Cliffe.

Not daring to trust any of the servants with the secret of their absence, except Fidele, my lady's maid, Eleanor had hired a fly from Chester to take them up beyond the lodge gates, where her wrappings would easily disguise Lady Violet's identity. Walking through the park chilled and wet them both, but there was no help for it.

They were barely in time for the train, and Eleanor having secured their tickets, they took possession of a compartment, and sank into their seats weary enough.

As the train moved slowly out of the station, Lady Violet turned suddenly, and caught at her companion's arm.

"Oh! stop, stop!" she cried, wildly. "I must go back. I have lost Daisy's picture," and she held up the two unclasped ends of a slender, exquisitely wrought gold chain she wore at her neck.

"You can't go back now," said Eleanor, calmly; "perhaps it is on the floor somewhere, or among your wrappings."

It was not so, however. The jewelled locket, containing the picture of Lady Violet's only sister, a sister whose fate was a mystery, even to her, was gone, past all present finding, and she sat down again, overcome by this accident, as she had not been by anything before.

It was considerably past the appointed hour

when they stopped at last before the little antiquated church, to which Conway had directed Eleanor to bring Grace Elroy.

The two gentlemen who waited for them, sheltered by the low, old-fashioned porch, were of nearly the same height. Both had long black beards, both wore half-masks under their soft slouched hats, and had long, ample cloaks, which completely enveloped their persons. So much alike were they in general appearance, that it was not easy to tell one from the other.

"Beatrice Duderant will never come out such a bitter day as this," spoke he who stood furthest back, "if, indeed, she would have come at all. Confess now, Conway, you made it up between you to play me a trick."

"You are calling names very rashly in a place where even the stones may have ears. I shouldn't blame her if she did play you a trick," said the other, in an irritated tone.

"I don't know who is going to hear, with the wind shrieking, and the sleet hissing like a snake in torment."

"You are poetical," said Conway, ironically.

"And you are—"

"Hush! here they are," cried Conway, and immediately laid a heavy hand on his companion, who was pressing forward. "Remember orders."

A close carriage stopped before the church.

Two ladies, closely veiled, descended from the carriage, and advanced slowly up the stone steps.

Conway advanced to meet them.

Lady Violet was trembling violently, but she had been too well cautioned by Eleanor of the danger in which her lover might be involved by even a chance word to speak. She only put her hand in the one Conway extended, and pressed his timidly.

As they mounted the steps, the wind swooped and tore at the wrappings of all three as though it had hands; and, as they entered the church, it shrieked after them like a voice of wild warning. Conway's companion joined them as they crossed the threshold. It was a moment of terrible excitement to all—to Conway and Eleanor Lyle, lest she, who was to one Grace Elroy, to the other Lady Violet, should betray her identity in her too evident agitation. To the two most concerned in this strange drama—to the two who were being so heartlessly victimised by those they trusted most—it was a moment of supreme and solemn awe—an instant of time in which they stood, as it were, on the very brink of that future from which their guardian angels might well try to snatch them back.

The transfer of Lady Violet's hand to the stranger's arm was not difficult in the confusion and bewilderment of the moment, and she moved down the aisle to the altar railing, unconscious, in the similarity of their general appearance, that she was not escorted by Conway. If there is such a thing as one spirit addressing another in this mortal frame, it might well be imagined that thus was this misguided and agitated girl accosted now.

As her hand touched the masked stranger's hand, a calm seemed to settle upon her perturbed spirits—a restful thrill to pervade her being.

The clergyman waited in his white surplice, with the book open, the clerk beside him.

They had not proved inaccessible to the inducements Conway had extended, to be judiciously blind to the exceeding mystery of this strange marriage, in which the bride, the groom, and even the attendants were masked.

It was over. The cruelly-deceived pair who had been wedded, each believing the other to be another, were quickly separated by their officious guardians.

Lady Violet was hurried into the carriage, which still waited, and whirled away to take train for Eaglescliffe, that they might be at home before the earl's return. It had been like a dream to my lady, that hurried ceremony, the old church, her masked companion at the altar.

Vane Conway had himself snatched her, as it were, from the very arms of her newly-wedded husband, the instant the ceremony was over. From first to last, the mysteriously-mated couple had not exchanged a single loud word, or heard the sound of each other's voices, save in a whisper, or in the faintly-uttered, solemn responses; and then each was too absorbed in the supreme business of the moment, or too full of whirling thoughts, to notice an unfamiliar tone.

Thus was accomplished that double deception, but for which this chronicle would never have been written. Thus were the deceived and the deceiver alike tricked by one wronged woman.

Vane Conway triumphantly imagined he had duped a man he hated into marriage with that poor victim of his wiles, Grace Elroy; and Lady Violet supposed she had married Conway, that unprincipled angler for her affections and her fortune.

As for the bridegroom, he who would one day be a titled gentleman, as Conway had assured Eleanor,

he was in reality the most fortunate as well as the most deceived of the trio, for while he believed himself to have become the husband and master of one of the queens of London society, a celebrated belle and coquette, who had only mocked and deluded him so far, he had instead, joined his destiny to that of a creature beside whose incomparableness the other was like a star upon the train of morning.

Of the two separate and distinct clues to this strange tangle, Eleanor Lyle held one, of which her false lover had no suspicion, and Conway hid the other from even her penetration.

Miss Lyle watched the masked and cloaked bridegroom as narrowly as her other anxieties would permit, but Conway's precautions had been too well taken! She discovered nothing which could afford any satisfactory clue to his identity in the future.

Lady Violet sat like a statue through all the transit back to Eaglescliffe, and Miss Lyle could not guess from the monosyllabic replies which dropped at intervals from her lips, what the nature of her thoughts might be.

"We shall meet again soon," had been Vane Conway's parting words, little guessing who he said them to, and the little sentence rang its changes up and down the chambers of Lady Violet's brain, all the way home, and for many a day after.

Once safe within their own luxurious apartments, the two divested themselves of their various wrappings, and had yielded to the first comparative freedom from anxiety they had experienced since they quitted Eaglescliffe. Fidele had been on the watch, and they had returned to the mansion as they had gone—unseen.

(To be continued.)

A ROMAN BRITON.—The excavations that are being made at Bath for the construction of the new Pump Room Hotel have brought to light some very interesting Roman remains. The most valuable results are the determination of the south and west limits of the great temple, and the discovery of some ornamental stonework so similar in details to that which appears upon the temple of Jupiter Stator at Rome, as to suggest the probable date of the Bath temple. The plan of the forum and the course of its surrounding ways may now be traced with sufficient accuracy to enable the antiquary to construct a tolerably perfect plan of Aquæ Solis, at the time when it was the grand watering-place of Roman Britain. A great many fragments of flat sheets of Roman glass have been found, which bear all the appearance of having been rolled or cast. It seems impossible to doubt, with this evidence before us, that the Romans employed glass for the purpose of lighting their houses as well as in the construction of drinking vessels. The Roman glass has a peculiar blue tint and is semi-opaque.

THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN RAILWAY TAXATION.—A return which has been issued shows the effect of the change in railroad taxation proposed in the Budget. To the public purse the result will be substantially the same as if the present 5 per cent. duty on passenger fares were reduced to 4 per cent.; to the companies the result will be different. Supposing the same traffic as in 1869, the North-Eastern will in future have to bear an increase of taxation to the amount of above 10,000*l.* a year; the Great Eastern will have its taxation reduced by above 10,000*l.* a year. The Caledonian will have its taxation increased by 4,800*l.* a year; the Midland 3,700*l.*; the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire, 3,000*l.* a year. As the total of the taxation is reduced, the gains, of course, outweigh the losses. The South-Eastern will pay less taxation than at present by 22,000*l.* a year; the South-Western, also will gain nearly 22,000*l.*; the London and North-Western and the Brighton above 18,000*l.*, the Great-Western above 17,000*l.*; the Metropolitan, 9,000*l.*; the Chatham and Dover, 7,000*l.*; the Great Northern 6,000*l.*; and the Bristol and Exeter, 4,000*l.* The total taxation is reduced by rather more than a fifth of its present amount; but such is the change in the incidence of the impost that the taxation of the North-Eastern, the Caledonian, and the Manchester and Sheffield will be increased by more than one-third, while the taxation of the South-Western and the Brighton will be reduced to less than half its present amount, and that of the Metropolitan to less than a-third of the amount now paid, and the South-Eastern nearly as much.

THE COAL TRADE.—The quantity of coal sent to London by railway during the last three months was considerably larger than for any corresponding period since the London and North-Western commenced carrying, in 1845, when it was credited with 8,387 tons. For the first quarter of the present year the Great Northern carried 235,317 tons; the Midland, 239,920 tons; London and North-Western, 233,747 tons; Great Eastern, 132,323 tons; and the Great Western, 119,562 tons. The total quantity for the quarter being 1,020,320 tons, against 735,517 tons for the corresponding period of last year, showing the very large increase of

285,803 tons. The Derbyshire colliers obtained the largest portion of the increase. Clay Cross alone, which now sends about one-eighth of all the coal entering the metropolis by railway, sending 35,671 tons more than for the corresponding period of last year. The increased tonnage sent by eight of the principal colliers on the Midland line between Eekington and Nottingham was no less than 63,598 tons. The increase on the Midland for the quarter altogether was 118,038 tons, or nearly double the quantity it conveyed for the same quarter of 1869. The increase on the Great Northern was 47,723 tons; on the Great Eastern, 46,938 tons; and on the London and North-Western, 57,242 tons, between the two periods named. Of the Silkestone coal—a great favourite in the London market—there were only sent during the past quarter 33,213 tons, against 37,728 tons for the same quarter of 1869. A much larger quantity, no doubt, would have been sent, but for the dispute at the Thornecliffe collieries, on account of which 9,000 tons less were sent to London during the last three months than for the same period of last year. The large increase in the tonnage of coal sent by railway has kept the sea-borne comparatively stationary, the increase on the quarter compared with 1869 being only 25,272 tons, against 285,803 tons by railway.

THE CRIME OF GREECE.

To enable Englishmen better to understand the conduct and condition of the Greek Government and nation than we have been able to do, there comes to our assistance in a remarkable manner at the very right moment a succinct and clear account of the condition of Greek brigandage, and the connection of the Government of Greece and the Greek nation with these robbers and assassins. It is a document that has a great and honourable name to endorse its value for calm utterance and truth; the materials being provided by a statesman, Sir Stafford Northcote, and also based upon the account of a Greek, Andrew Moakonisio, a cavalry lieutenant. He tells us that the origin of these Greek brigands was a patriotic band, but finally they have degenerated into their present condition, and increased in numbers so as to become a formidable power in Greece. The code of laws of these men contain fifteen clauses—the following:—

1. All treachery to be punished by cutting off the extremities of the traitor, as an example to others.
2. On a second offence the traitor to be killed and exposed.
3. The rich to be captured, and not allowed to depart till they have paid ransom, and sworn not to injure the brigands by a relation of their adventures to the authorities.
4. The captives, if not ransomed, to be strangled.
5. If the ransom be short of the sum named, lots to be drawn whether the captive shall go free, having one ear cut off to show that the sum was deficient, or shall be killed.
6. Captives once ransomed must, if re-captured, pay a second time.
7. All soldiers to be killed.
8. The bearers of the ransom to be respected, and small money to be given them on their departure.
9. After the ransom is paid, before the captive is released, he is to be kept and entertained for some few days, to see what manner of man he is; and before he goes his beard is to be shaved off.
10. All robbers plotting with Government to be killed.
11. No one to be admitted into the band as a member who has not previously committed a criminal act.
12. Should a captive escape, his keeper is to be held responsible, and expelled from the band.
13. Never to steal the goats or sheep from the shepherds, but to pay for all taken.
14. To offer gifts at any monastery or hermitage, by way of expiation for sin.
15. Not to be cruel to captives; to go shares in everything; and never to injure women.

This is new to Englishmen, but old to Greeks. They know the brigands and their laws clause by clause, and the Greek Government was fully aware that "should the robbers be besieged during the time of the bargaining both captive and ransom are destroyed." An English writer prior to the telegraphing of the massacre thought the Greek Government right in believing that the brigands would not destroy their captives, as they would lose the ransom, but the law among them appears to be to consider as lightly of money as of life when they are treacherously dealt by. This was, however, no secret to the Greek Government; and knowing what the issue would be they attacked the brigands, at the expense of the lives of the prisoners.

We are enabled to make this clear charge and prove it. Why did the Greek Government thus

act? Not certainly from sudden indignation, but more naturally, it is said, to escape paying the ransom.

Lord Clarendon has well done his duty as an English gentleman, a statesman, and a man of feeling, and those who do not intimately know the mourning families, will, we are sure, offer a tribute of sorrow, not to assuage their grief, but rather to show them how great it is, and thus sanctify the outflow of those bitter wailings which human nature's law it is to indulge in at these moments.

STRIKES IN FRANCE.—The threatened strikes in Paris have not been carried out; a number of flaming red placards were stuck up in some parts of the town, and some of the discontented had the cool effrontery to mount guard over them. The police, however, tore down the bills and took up the guardians, who, in spite of their attempts to rouse the lookers-on to the rescue, were carried off to prison. It is said that more than thirty of these men are now incarcerated, and we hear no more of the strikes. The strike in the coal basin of Fourchambault seems to be of a serious character. It commenced on the 7th ult., and still continues; and it has extended to the works at Torton, on the left bank of the Loire, between six and seven miles off. On the 11th the men from the latter place crossed the river to join those of Fourchambault, crying *Vive la République*, and singing the "Marseillaise." General Sanglé-Ferrière, who is in command of a subdivision of the army at Nevers, sent some infantry and a squadron of Lancers, but the aspect of the workmen was so threatening that reinforcements were sent for to Bruges, and on the following day the Ministers of War telegraphed to the commandant at Lyons to send the three battalions of the Twenty-seventh Foot to Fourchambault by rail; two more squadrons of Lancers also were dispatched from Moulins. These energetic measures seem to have prevented any serious disorder, but the market was pillaged, and the shops of several dealers in provisions sacked; but this was stopped by the inhabitants, who promptly constituted themselves a "league of order," and set the rioters at defiance. The strike soon reached the collieries of Commentry and Bérenot, belonging to the company of the Forges of Châtillon and Commentry, and situated at distances of ten and fifteen miles from Fourchambault; and a regiment of infantry and two squadrons of Lancers were immediately despatched from Montluçon and Moulins, and prevented any violence. At Creuzot the strike seems to be entirely at an end, the elected delegates themselves having advised the miners to resume work. It seems that the unfortunate spirit which has done so much injury to this country is becoming common to all civilised nations.

DIMINUTION OF WEIGHT IN MAN DURING THE COLD MONTHS.—Mr. Milner, of Wakefield, some years since performed a series of experiments with a view of determining the periodical fluctuations in weight, substance, and form, which the whole body undergoes. He weighed every prisoner upon his entrance into the convict establishment at Wakefield, and subsequently at the end of every calendar month, all of them being subjected to similar conditions of temperature, food, exercise, and ventilation. The number of men weighed exceeded 4000, and the total number of individual weighings was 44,004. From his experiments it was found that there was a progressive loss of weight in January, February, and March, and a gain in April, May, June, July, and August, and a loss in September, October, November, and December; or, in other words, an increase of weight during the hot months, and a diminution during the cold. These results are in accordance with philosophical truth, for Dr. E. Smith has shown that the quantity of carbonic acid exhaled in winter is largely in excess of that given out in summer, and the sudden weight in April is found to correspond with an equally abrupt diminution in the quantity of carbonic acid expired.

SOCIETY FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE FINE ARTS.—Mr. Henry O'Neill, A.R.A., recently gave a lecture on "The Influence of Art on Civilization, Music and the Drama, and the Influence of Fashion on Art." From the influence of music on art he proceeded to that of the drama, which he considered gave the clearest insight into the moral and intellectual being of a nation. He regretted the present lavish expenditure upon dramatic trifles, the taste for dramatic realism that destroyed all scenic illusion, and the vicious sensationalism that degraded the stage. The remedy which he suggested was an efficient censorship of the drama, such as existed at Athens in the time of Phrynus. Mr. T. E. S. Temple said that English dramatic art had rather improved than declined of late, and that Dr. Westland Marston and Mr. T. W. Robertson must be excepted from the general condemnation of dramatic authors; whilst Mr. Sadler attributed the decline of the higher forms of dramatic art, in part, to the incompetency of actors.



DANIEL MACLISE, R. A.

"ART is long—life is brief," or, as the old Latin phrase runs, "Ars longa, vita brevis est." In the sudden decease of Daniel Maclise the maxim has received the latest illustration of its truth; for though the special branch of art to which his genius was devoted has lost indeed one of its very foremost upholders and ornaments, it will assuredly be sustained by others; yet by his unexpected loss it is strongly felt that, though he lived long enough for fame, he has died too soon for art.

In his artistic career—so suddenly closed on the 25th ult.—Mr. Maclise had reaped all the honours which his profession has to offer to its most successful votaries, although he may not have garnered so much of worldly emolument as falls to the lot of many. Doubtless he could have done so, had he worked for wealth; but he preferred to labour for the higher motive, the pure love of his profession, and he has achieved his sufficient reward—having won the very highest niche in the temple of Art, and leaving behind him the reputation of being the greatest British painter of his day.

The deceased artist was born in Cork, on the 25th of January, 1811, but was of Scottish descent. In that famous battle of Fontenoy, which was fought more than a hundred years ago, and in which the historic "Irish Brigade" won so much glory for the arms of France, one of his ancestors took part, and was severely wounded; another of them drew his sword for the Stuarts. The father of the artist was also a soldier, and held a commission in the Elgin Fencibles. While with his regiment at Cork, he married an Irish lady named Clear, of good mercantile family in that city; the three sons of this union made themselves noteworthy—they were the painter, the distinguished surgeon, and a third brother, who attained military rank. The father retired from the service, set up in business in Cork, but did not suc-

ceed. Maclise's education was originally good, and much improved by studies in after-life; in youth he distinguished himself rather by application than by those brilliant abilities which in early manhood brought him to notice as a painter. In 1820 he was noted in the Cork School of Art as a handsome boy of remarkable intelligence. He made a tour among the mountains of Wicklow at this time. His first occupation in life was in Newenham's banking-house in Cork. Determined, however, to follow Art, he left this office at the age of sixteen; and his first artistic occupation of a profitable nature was drawing portraits of the officers of the 14th Light Dragoons, then quartered in Cork. Next, he studied anatomy in Dublin under Dr. Woodroffe. In 1828 he came to London and entered himself as a student in the Royal Academy, where he shortly after gained the medals of the Antique School, and that for copying Guido's 'Fortune.' What his ability was at this date may be judged from the fact that in 1829 he contributed to the Royal Academy Exhibition for the first time a painting (961) styled 'Malvolio affecting the Count,' the same subject, but not the same picture, as that which is comprised in the Vernon Gift. The latter appeared at the Academy in 1840, and is now at South Kensington. About this time he was engaged in supplying many books with illustrations, and, among others, *Fraser's Magazine* with a series of full-length portraits, which extended to seventy-two in number, of eminent literary and scientific personages; these illustrated so many memoirs, written by Dr. Maginn, and were signed "A. Croquis." At this time he wrote his name in the Scottish manner, McClise. In 1830 he went to Paris for the first time, and sent to the Royal Academy seven works, six of which were portraits, including those of the Princess Sophia and Mrs. S. C. Hall. The latter and her husband were amongst Maclise's earliest friends. He was then distinguished for a handsome presence and noble manner, and rapidly rose in public es-

teem. In 1831 he gained the Royal Academy gold medal for a picture of 'The Choice of Hercules,' which is said to have been one of the most excellent of those which have been so distinguished. He did not avail himself of the privilege of travelling, which belongs to the winners of the Academy gold medal, but he continued to paint and exhibit portraits, many of which are now heirlooms in great families. 'Puck disenchanting Bottom' was shown in 1832; 'All Hallow Eve,' one of his most admirable works, in 1833; 'Mokanna Unveiling' was exhibited at the British Institution in the same year. 'Captain Rock' in 1834. 'The Vow to the Ladies and the Peacock,' the first of his chivalric subjects, attracted great enthusiasm in 1835, and insured his election as A.R.A. in that year. This was followed in regular succession by works which made him one of the most remarkable and highly esteemed painters of the century—viz.: 'Macbeth and the Witches' (1836); a fine 'Portrait of Lady Sykes,' the large picture of 'Bohemian Gipsies,' and others (1837); 'Salvator Rosa painting Masaniello,' 'Sophia and Olivia dressing Moses for the Fair,' 'The Wood Ranger,' his diploma picture, now in the Royal Academy Collection, and 'Christmas in the Baron's Hall' (1838); 'The Second Adventure in Gil Blas,' 'Robin Hood' (1839); 'The Banquet-Scene in Macbeth,' 'Scene from Gil Blas,' 'Scene from Twelfth Night' (Vernon Gift) (1840). In the last-named year he was made a Royal Academician.

It is needless to give a complete list of Maclise's works; a few of the more prominent of them may suffice. Thus we may mention: 'The Sleeping Beauty' (1841); 'The Play-Scene in Hamlet' (1842), now in the Vernon Gift; 'Macbeth and the Ghost,' which was recently again before the world; 'Comus'; 'The Gross of Green Spectacles'; 'Caxton in his Printing-Office' (1851); 'Marriage of Strongbow and Eva' (1854). In 1856, the first time for a long series of years, he did not exhibit. 'The Interview between Peter the Great and William the Third' (1857), in which year appeared the noble series of designs, since published by the Art Union of London, styled 'The Story of the Norman Conquest'—a series which had occupied his industrious hands and facile pencil during twelve years before. He was one of the painters of frescoes for the Summer-House in Buckingham Palace Gardens—repeating 'Comus.' He painted 'The Spirit of Justice' and 'Chivalry,' in the House of Lords, in 1850. 'Alfred in the Danish Camp,' and 'The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva,' were intended for the Royal Gallery where 'Wellington' and 'Nelson' are. When 'Wellington' was in preparation the artist prepared a cartoon of the size, forty-two feet in length, of the picture; this was exhibited, and won such admiration that some of his abler artistic brethren gave Maclise a gold portecrayon in testimony of their applause. In 1859 he travelled in Germany to inquire into the practice of mural painting in that country, and, returning, wrote a capital report, which was printed among the parliamentary papers, on the subject, recommending water-glass as a medium. He thus introduced that material to this country, executing both the Royal Gallery pictures by its means. He illustrated Lord Lytton's 'Pilgrims of the Rhine,' and Moore's 'Irish Melodies'; designed the 'Turner Gold Medal' for the Royal Academy, and that for the International Exhibition of 1862. Maclise was author of many beautiful sonnets. He was a member of the Royal Academy of Stockholm, and greatly interested in the schools of the Art Department, and much of his character and opinions on art may be studied in his evidence before the last Royal Academy Commission, 1864.

When at the decease of Sir C. Eastlake, in 1866, Sir E. Landseer declined the presidency of the Royal Academy, the honour was offered to Mr. Maclise, but he refused it; as he also did the offer of knighthood. Of the works which are hung on the walls of the galleries in Burlington Gardens in this year's Exhibition of the Royal Academy, the painting (197) entitled 'The Earls of Desmond and Ormond,' will be sure to attract a large share of attention; for it is the last painting of Maclise. This picture the artist has done admirably, and refreshed those laurels which were won in studies that culminated with the great works at Westminster and the 'King Cophetua' in last year's Exhibition. This great painter has left the nation in his debt for the fruits of seven years' arduous labours, the very cream of great artistic genius and vast powers, steadily devoted without regard to self-interest, and under the cold shadows of official neglect and public apathy. Such was the history, such the nature of the great pictures of 'Wellington' and 'Nelson,' which effectually carry out the grand ideas conceived for the decoration of the Parliament House,—ideas into which Maclise threw himself with unrelenting energy, and which he carried out while many others talked and boasted.

We cannot conclude our notice without referring to the manner in which his character was spoken of at the recent dinner of the Royal Academy. "Of his genius in his chosen art," said Mr. Charles Dickens, who was one of his two most intimate friends and most constant companions, "I will venture to say nothing here, but of his prodigious fertility of mind and wonderful wealth of intellect I may confidently assert that they would have made him, if he had so minded, at least as great a writer as he was a painter. The gentlest and most modest of men—the freshest as to his generous appreciation of young aspirants, and the frankest and largest-hearted as to his peers—incapable of a sordid or ignoble thought, gallantly sustaining the true dignity of his vocation without one grain of self-ambition, wholesomely natural at the last as at the first, 'in wit a man, simplicity a child.' No artist, of whatsoever denomination, I make bold to say, ever went to his rest leaving a golden memory more pure from dross, or having devoted himself with truer chivalry to the art-goddess whom he worshipped."

THE LOCKSMITH OF LYONS.

CHAPTER XVI.

Thou mayest hold a serpent by the tongue,
A chafed lion by the mortal paw.
A fasting tiger safer by the tooth,
Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost hold.
Shakespeare.

AFTER an interval of silence, during which the old physician continued to stare at the face of the artisan, and the artisan at the physician, with a smile of bitterness frozen as it were upon his lips, Antoine, the footman, a tall, grave, gray-haired man, advanced respectfully, and addressing the artisan, said:

"Monsieur, it is true that the brand is there, and so it is here upon my shoulder, but you and I, who were branded at the same time, upon the same charge, know that we were innocent."

"Ah, my good Antoine," replied the artisan, "the verdict of the jury declared us to be guilty, and the brand we still bear. It does not matter that you and I, up to the time we were arrested for a crime of which neither of us had ever dreamed, had led quiet and blameless lives. We were convicted and condemned, and served three years in the galleys of Toulon. That fact is indisputable."

"Come," said Dr. Planche, recovering from his dismay; "I do not know that it is necessary to inform La Mother of that fact."

"Ah, doctor, you cannot advise me to conceal it from him!" exclaimed the artisan.

"You are too morbidly chivalrous," said the doctor, with a very discontented air. "Here, we must sleep upon this matter, do you hear? In the first place, though these wounds of yours are not serious, you have lost much blood. You must have repose. In the second place, the girl may not be the child of General La Mother. I am sure she is no relative of those wretches, but that is no proof that she is the child of Henri La Mother—who, by the way, is recently become my next door neighbour, though personally he is not an acquaintance. Now let Antoine conduct you to the apartments you always occupy when you remain in my house. In the morning, if you are in fit condition, we will talk this matter over. Here, I have prepared this drink for you. Now dismiss from your mind everything except a desire to sleep. There—not another word. Good night."

But in the morning the artisan was not in a condition to converse sensibly upon any subject. In fact a high fever was upon him, and he was delirious. This fever and delirium lasted three days, during which time he was not allowed to be seen by any one, except the doctor and the footman Antoine.

Blanche, much alarmed for the safety of her lover, remained in the apartments of Madame Planche, the amiable and kind-hearted wife of the benevolent doctor.

To her entreaties to be permitted to wait upon her lover, Madame Planche, warned by the doctor, replied:

"He is delirious. Already it requires a strong man to keep him in bed. The mere sight of you might be fatal to him."

"Ah, but I love him so dearly," pleaded Blanche; "and we are betrothed. I know he adores me as I adore him."

"He is a very worthy young man," was the reply of Madame Planche, "and I am sure you, my poor child, are very good and worthy too. It is very right that you and he should love each other, but you and he must be separated for a few days. I will give you something to employ your mind. We have a wardrobe to make up for you. I have been obliged to put on you a dress of my own—and is it not a

world too large? Leave Monsieur George to the doctor and Antoine. Antoine is an old and faithful friend of the young man. Antoine is a Swiss, and has known Monsieur George ever since the latter was a baby. There is a mystery about that, and I do not know that it will ever be cleared up. Be content to remain with me as if you were my daughter. I was not always rich, my child. I and my dear husband were quite poor when we married, but he rose to be a great physician, and some of his discoveries and inventions have made him a man of great wealth. He is much wiser than I am in many things—not in all. But here comes Janet with a load of linen, silk, muslin, and other material. Come, let us select."

With a sad heart Blanche complied, thinking only of her wounded lover and the many mysteries around her—mysteries which she could not fathom, but which declared that she was never again to be a slave to the loom.

On the old doctor peeped into his wife's sitting-room, and seeing Blanche surrounded by silk, satins, linens, muslins and dressmakers, hurried away, muttering:

"Oh, she will have enough to think about. Now I will set the police after those vindictive snake-charmers! My faith, the snake-charmers shall also have something to think about—so shall the police of Lyons."

But the worthy doctor soon found that the police of Lyons already had a great deal to think about. They were preparing for the expected and very much dreaded insurrection of weavers. Nobody could say when the outbreak would begin nor where; but everybody seemed to know that an insurrection was to be ere long, and that it would be a terrible one—worse than that of 1831. In truth, it was almost as much as a policeman's life was worth to venture into the disturbed suburbs of La Croix Rousse, Fourvier, or Brotteaux. The authorities, mindful of the dreadful scenes of the insurrection of 1831, were intimidated as they heard the mutterings of the coming storm.

"The confederacies of workmen and politicians," says the history of that time and place, "were a species of a state within a state, and through the channels of the journals boldly defied the laws and the national authorities. Such was the daring character of the conspirators, that twenty master weavers addressed a letter to the conductor of prosecutions, declaring themselves also members of the executive council. The weavers as a body passed resolutions to resist the laws."

Under these circumstances Doctor Planche found that the intimidated police had something more important to think about than a few outlaws.

The doctor, however, found among the police an old acquaintance whom he had known in Paris, and this man promised to effect the arrest of some, if not all three, within a few days, and also to keep his eye upon the movements of Captain Hasserebrek.

With this promise the doctor was forced to remain content. Still he made private inquiries as regards Hasserebrek. He was glad to learn that Hasserebrek was confined to his bed by his hurts, and that he bid fair to remain there for a week at least. Returning home the doctor devoted his attention to the welfare of the artisan, after despatching this note to the authorities in Paris:—

"There is going to be an insurrection in Lyons as formidable at least as that of November, 1831. It may not take place for several weeks, but it is certain to be, unless a very large force of the National Guard of Paris is sent here at once to support and encourage the affrighted authorities of Lyons. Several members of the infamous band once notorious in Paris as 'The Snake-charmers,' are here. The chief of them, Barbe Rousseau, is the prime instigator of these disturbances, and even aims at subverting the dynasty of Louis Philippe. Two of his old associates, and the most dangerous, are with him—Le Scorpion, and Lisette, 'The Owl.' If the intended insurrection be not nipped in the bud, it will be terrible, and may extend to other cities. Fortunately there is no great and capable spirit among the disaffected. Barbe Rousseau is the most formidable, and he is a man who ever permits his passions to blind his prudence. He is incapable of conducting a revolution, which no doubt he aspires to do, but he is very capable of doing a great deal of mischief. He should be arrested immediately, but here the civil authorities are feeble and affrighted. In 1831 the National Guard of Lyons aided the rioters. They are scarcely to be depended on now."

"ALPHONSE ABAT."

Alphonse Abat was the name by which Dr. Planche had once been well known in Paris.

While the artisan was ill the footman, Coulot, reported to his master, General Mother, thus:

"The locksmith, Lackville, has disappeared from

La Croix Rousse. That is, his shop has not been opened since the day we saw him beating the officers of the National Guard."

"That is unfortunate," replied La Mother, "as I am impatient to converse with the young man."

"The woman called Grimo, and the girl she called her niece, have also disappeared."

"That is still more unfortunate," said the general. "It was by chance that I learned the old woman was in Lyons, and now, as she may be on her guard, I may never find her again. As for the girl, she is an object of interest to me, though the young locksmith imagined so."

"She is a very beautiful girl, my general."

"That may be. I have never seen her. She cannot be very beautiful in my mind if she is the niece of that infamous old woman, the sister of the assassin who destroyed the life of my harmless babe," said the general, frowning as he thought of the past.

"The girl has always been regarded as a most innocent, artless and virtuous maiden," remarked Coulot André; "and the most envious in La Croix Rousse have never breathed a slander against her."

"I am pleased to learn this if only for the sake of the young locksmith, who has something about him strangely attractive to me. And what of that fellow they call 'the Balded Crab'?"

"He is doubtless somewhere in Lyons, general, but I have not been able to find him, as I am not a member of the association of weavers, among whom he has great influence."

"Then I must, for the present, give up the hopes of regaining certain important papers which that old woman stole from my house many years ago," said La Mother, sadly. "But do not relinquish your efforts, Coulot, to discover the hiding-place of the woman."

Monsieur Le Scorpion, concealed in an obscure quarter of La Croix Rousse, nursed his wounds—tortured his injured eye being exceedingly painful and painful to heal.

"Wait," was the advice of Barbe Rousseau, both to him and Mother Grimo, who was furious to regain control of Blanche, "wait patiently. The time is not far off when you shall again have the girl. Those with whom she is cannot suspect that she is the daughter of Henri La Mother. The house into which the locksmith led her is even under the eyes of my spies. If she ever ventures into the street she will be seized."

"Oh, as we know where she is, why can we not go and demand her as my niece?" cried Mother Grimo, who had, by the advice of her brother, changed her abode.

"Do you know who that Dr. Charles Planche is, Lisette?"

"Some friend of that rascally locksmith."

"A very powerful friend," sneered Barbe Rousseau. "I have discovered who he is. He is Dr. Alphonse Abat."

On hearing this, Mother Grimo began to tremble and stare.

"The man who baffled us all, yonder in Paris?"

"The same. The physician who ventured in disguise into a secret meeting of our circle, learnt all our secrets, denounced us to the police, caused nearly all our society to be executed, and, in fine, broke up 'The Snake Charmers,' and drove us into exile to save our heads—after escaping our daggers. Oh, he is not a simpleton! It was he, no doubt, who so described each of us to this Robert Lackville that the latter—himself no simpleton—at once recognised us. It is not time to go to Dr. Planche and demand the girl; but the time is not far off when we shall go there and take her by force. Wait. I do not see why you snatched the babe of La Mother from the river into which I had cast it."

"As for that, it is easily told. You had just cheated me of my share in the La Mother burglary. Barbe Rousseau and I hated you; you hated La Mother; and when I saw you running towards the Pont Neuf, declaring that since the father had escaped you, you were about to drown the child, I ran after you and saved it, without your knowledge, or that of any one else. I knew La Mother would gladly give all his wealth to regain his child. But the pursuit set in motion by that fellow Abat, forced me to fly from France, taking the child with me. And when, years after, I ventured to return to France, believing you to be dead yonder in Hungary, and Le Scorpion also dead somewhere, La Mother was not in France. He was in Africa, in the army. So I waited, and years passed on. No one recognised me, thanks to the dose of poison you gave me just before you and Le Scorpion left France. I, who was once so enormously fat, had become a mere skeleton. Oh, you and he imagined I was dead when you left me, face down, on the table, after our parting supper."

"Pooh! I did not put poison in your wine," said her brother; "Le Scorpion did it, if anybody. The

fact is, I do not think you were poisoned. You had a fit of indigestion."

The old woman, who was ten years older than her villainous brother, glared savagely at him, as he laughed coarsely in her face, and said:

"I was poisoned. You know it. And if you did not do it, you knew Le Scorpion was going to do it, and perhaps saw him do it. Wretches! you both wished to be rid of me. You thought I was dead. You were so sure of it that you never returned to the house to inquire."

"Oh, we had no time, the police were after us."

"If they were, why did they not find me? I was in that house a week after you left. Ha! so was the child of La Mother's in the care of a woman I had employed."

"All that is past now. We are to be friends and allies again."

"Yes, because you hope to share the money which La Mother will give to me if I regain the girl and prove her to be his child."

"Why not? since without my aid you can never regain the girl."

"And without me it cannot be proved that the girl is the child of La Mother."

"Therefore you and I, my dearly beloved sister, must necessarily be firm and true friends."

"I wish I had known that Henri La Mother had returned to France," cried the old woman. "I only wish I had suspected he was in this city."

"Then you could have made a magnificent bargain," laughed Barbe Rousseau, mockingly. "But you see it was not to be. The girl is out of your hands now, and if you make a stir in the matter it may come out that she is La Mother's child. You say that the locksmith accused you of having stolen her."

"Oh, that has often been said by others," replied the old woman, spitefully. "And only because Blanche has much beauty and innocence, and I have not a relic of mine. But I heed not their tongues. I have seen mothers as ugly as sin, have lovely daughters. La Mother should be very grateful to me."

"Oh—very!"

"I mean it. I could have made her a thief."

"That is very probable."

"Besides, but for me she would have drowned like a kitten in the river."

"Very true, amiable old saint. I drink your health and long life to you. It was a most virtuous rescue, and done to spite me, your loving brother. Had I been there struggling in the water, you would have done the same for me," said Barbe Rousseau, jeeringly.

"La Mother should be very grateful to me," continued Mother Grimo, meditatively; "I reared her in a most pious manner."

"For which you deserve great credit. It must have been very hard work for you to preach piety! But you had a worthy object in view. It would not have suited you to have done with the child as I would. I hated La Mother—I loved the woman he married," said Barbe Rousseau, with a savage oath. "I loved Leola de Vale."

"Bah! what madness in you it was to love a beautiful lady of her character!" cackled Mother Grimo, mockingly, in her turn.

"I was a merchant's son, she was but a merchant's daughter," growled the ruffian. "She had no nobler blood in her veins than I. Am I not of the family of the great Barons de Rousseau? I was a fair match for her."

"Oh, what vanity! with that beautiful face, that figure," cackled the delighted old woman.

Barbe Rousseau discharged an oath at her, which only increased her merriment, and made her cackle all the louder: whereupon he hurled a tumbler at her head in great wrath.

"Take care! If you had hit me," screamed the old woman, infuriated by the humming of the glass as it narrowly missed her head, "I have another sting ready."

"I care nothing for your knife, if it is poisoned," said Barbe Rousseau, with a wary glance, however, at the glittering blade the old woman had drawn.

"There, let us be friends—but do not again allude to my appearance. Let us speak of La Mother, whom I hate as bitterly as ever. If the woman he married had married me, I might have been a great man, as great as he is. If the child had been reared by me, I would have reared her to disgrace the very name of La Mother. As it is, it is best that the girl is pure and spotless; but no credit to you for that."

"And why not?"

"Because you knew La Mother would rather pay you a million francs and regain his child as pure from sin as when he lost her, than pay a sou and regain a vicious thief! It was simply a speculation with you."

"Perhaps it was, in the beginning," muttered the

old woman, "but I learned to love the girl, as much as I could ever learn to love a human being."

"Come, you forget the worthy Le Scorpion—the gay husband of your youth," said her brother, tauntingly.

"That was a marriage of convenience. I always detested Le Scorpion—long before he gained that name which becomes him so well. I suppose he is to share the reward of all my trouble, all my foresight—the wretch."

"Why not? He is a valuable fellow. We shall need him. I want to pit him against the locksmith. That locksmith is a formidable fellow—very popular in La Croix Rousse, although he tells the weavers an outbreak will bring only calamity upon them. Do you know that the fellow used to be a *galerien*?"

"Oh! a *galerien*! I knew he had two names—Lackville and Herbert—but that is very common. A *galerien*!"

"So Esark Hasserbrek declares. He says he has often basted Lackville yonder in the galleys at Toulon—in fact, that he branded him. Hasserbrek knows more about the locksmith than he is ready to tell."

"Oh! and I suppose that Hasserbrek, whom I always suspected of being a spy upon us yonder in Paris, is also to share the reward of my labours!" cried Mother Grimo. "Oh, if I had only known that Henri La Mother had come to Lyons," exclaimed the old woman, in a fury. "Then would I have alone received all the pay. He is worth millions. She is his only child; and to regain her—oh! he would pay me down half of all he is worth. Curse the luck!"

"I am very sorry I told you La Mother is in Lyons. I am afraid it will make you very pious," said Barbe Rousseau, rising. "How do you like this room, eh?"

"This room? Why it is a very good room, for that matter, though too high up for me. There is only one window in it."

"Less chance for thieves to get at that dear chest on which you are now sitting, my sister," said Barbe Rousseau, now at the door, from the great lock of which he slyly slipped the key into his sleeve.

"I am very sorry that I did not know Henri La Mother was in Lyons," repeated Mother Grimo, shaking her head. "I could have managed it."

"I am afraid you are getting pious, and thinking of doing a virtuous action on your own account," said her brother, now outside of the door, the door nearly closed and his ugly head thrust into the room.

At this Mother Grimo started violently, and glared at Barbe Rousseau.

"What do you mean, you plotter?"

"Are you thinking of taking a sly trip at night to No. 145, Place Bellecour, my dear Lisette?"

"You are a fool."

"I would be to trust you, my dear," cried Barbe Rousseau, who then slammed the door and had it locked on the outside in an instant.

"Stars of light! He has locked me up!" screamed Mother Grimo, flying at the door, and trying in vain to open it.

"Oh, are you there my divine Lisette?" sneered Barbe Rousseau, at the key-hole.

"What does this mean, you ruffian?" replied the enraged old woman, beating the door with her fists.

"I am afraid you had an idea."

"An idea! Let me out. How dare you lock me up?"

"Patience, my dear one, you shall have company if you feel lonely. I have provided for that."

"You intend to make me a prisoner, you traitor?"

"Such is true, my dear sister. You have an intention, a little plot of your own in your dear old head."

"You are a wretch!" screamed Mother Grimo, beating at the door with her fists and heels. "Why should I have any plot of my own. Tell me that?"

Here Mother Grimo rained such a storm of blows and yells at the door that Barbe Rousseau, on the outside, danced with laughter, shouting:

"Keep that up, it amuses me. Ho! ho! it amuses me."

Perceiving that he was so amused, Mother Grimo ceased to hammer on the door.

"Good. You are listening in there."

"I am listening, rascal."

"You meant to play me a fine trick, my dear sister; I saw it beaming in those beautiful eyes of yours—those lovely eyes which look different ways. You had a design to go to the general and make a magnificent bargain for yourself. Patience—look under your bed, and you will find a trap-door. It opens into the room below. When you wish to converse go there."

Mother Grimo darted at the bed, drew it aside, and saw an iron ring, apparently affixed to a trap-door.

"Oh, what a fool I was to trust Barbe Rousseau,"

she exclaimed, as she lifted this trap-door and glared down into the opening.

CHAPTER XVII.

The mind that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the scorpion girt by fire,
In circles narrowing as it glows,
The flames around their captive close. *Byron.*

MOTHER GRIMO, clinging with both hands to the edges of the opening, and lying upon all fours, elongated her lean neck, so as to thrust her head as far as possible into the room below.

A glance told her that its floor had been totally removed, no doubt by bits and fragments from time to time by the poverty-stricken couple who had formerly occupied that part of the house. On the floor of the second room beneath was a table, upon which a lamp was burning, though it was daylight without.

There had been two windows in the upper and now floorless room, but Mother Grimo saw that both were boarded up, and securely fastened against egress. There were also two windows in the lower room, both small and heavily shuttered. The floor of the upper room being destroyed the two rooms were, therefore, made one, with a very lofty ceiling—the ceiling wherein was the trap-door, through which Mother Grimo was now glaring.

It was full twenty-five feet from the trap to the floor of the lower room. Unless a stout pair of wings, or a strong rope-ladder were given Mother Grimo, it was not probable that she could reach the lower room.

Besides, at the table on which burned the lamp, a man was seated, smoking a very long pipe. On the table, also, were bottles, glasses, and the remnants of a savoury repast.

"Ha! you, down there!" cried the old woman, hailing the man below. "Who are you?"

The man, whose figure was wrapped in a flashy-looking smoking-gown, and one of whose eyes was concealed by a bandage, looked up and glared back at Mother Grimo with one eye.

As he glared he grinned mockingly.

"Ho! It is Le Scorpion!" exclaimed Mother Grimo, recognising him.

"At your service, my dear," sneered Le Scorpion. "It is just as near as I wish to be to you."

"Why are you there at all, Fox?"

"Oh, I am here to recover from my wound. My eye pains me horribly. I miss also the five teeth I lost. I am, in short, nursing myself, to be of use in the campaign our dear Barbe Rousseau has in view. Besides, I am here to be near my dear Lisette."

"You are then my jailor!"

"Only one of them. You forget Barbe Rousseau."

"And how long am I to be kept locked up and guarded by you two villains?" demanded Mother Grimo in a rage.

"Who can tell? Perhaps but a day or two. Perhaps a month. As for that, perhaps all your life. You intended to betray us. At least you intended to make terms for yourself with the general. We saw that in your face the other night when we spoke together after our long separation, in Rue St. Denis. Even Hasserbrek suspected it."

"Hasserbrek! You had better suspect him."

"We are sure of him. Besides, he can prove nothing. He has only a suspicion. You have some proofs in that chest of yours."

"You might have robbed me of the chest, or have killed me, as easily as you have made me a prisoner, Le Scorpion."

"That is very true, my love, but you are much more valuable to us alive than the contents of the chest would be were you dead."

"And it is thus you keep the oath we all took together the other night—the oath to renew the circle of the Snake-charmers, and to share alike."

"The Snake-charmers' are of the past," sneered Le Scorpion. "That will do for the present. You know you are a prisoner now."

"My curse upon you all!" screamed Mother Grimo. Le Scorpion retaliated with a volley of oaths and jeers. The old woman exhausted herself in upbraids, petitions and maledictions, and then, closing the trap-door, began an examination of her prison—for such she had no doubt her room was destined to be.

At the end of half an hour she sat down, convinced that she was securely locked up. In her rage she wept; she even shed tears, a thing she had not done for years.

Then she burst into a storm of curses at herself for having confessed to Barbe Rousseau that Blanche was the child of Henri and Leola La Mother. After that, she cursed the locksmith who had rescued Blanche.

Then raising the trap-door, she rained down a deluge of wrath at Le Scorpion; at all of which Le Scorpion laughed and jeered by turns.

"I know what I will do," finally cried the old woman. "I will destroy the papers I know are valuable to La Mother. I will burn up the dress and everything that was on the child when I dragged it from the Seine."

"Well, do it!" shouted Le Scorpion.

Mother Grimo rushed to her chest and unlocked it. It had a deep tray, in which she kept her linen. She removed this tray, the contents of which were as usual.

Under this tray was another. She found this as she had last seen it, an hour before.

Under this was a small box, in which, under lock and key, she had preserved a small bundle of clothes—that which Blanche told the artisan she had once seen, and thought a bundle of infant's clothes.

Mother Grimo, quivering with a blind fury which had no purpose except to destroy the bundle, opened the small box.

She stared. The box was empty! There was a secret receptacle in the bottom of the box, in which Mother Grimo kept a certain package of papers and parchments. She found that also empty. The clothes and other articles which she had taken from the child immediately after rescuing it from the Seine, and the valuable La Mother papers and documents were gone!

Mother Grimo, perceiving this loss, fell flat on her face, and howled. Her cry was like the howl of a wounded wolf. As this cry rang from her lips, another cry came ringing up through the open trap-door. This cry was a shout, a yell of delight from Le Scorpion, who had contrived to rob the chest while it was being removed from Rue St. Denis.

The robbery was very cleverly executed, as we will pause to relate. When Mother Grimo, after her conference with Le Scorpion, and Barbe Rousseau and Esark Hasserbek, consented to leave her quarters in Rue St. Denis, she resolved not to allow the chest to be taken out of her sight.

And it was not. It was carried down to the street by two stout fellows, with Mother Grimo's hands on it all the time, and placed in an open wagon. Into this wagon got Barbe Rousseau, Le Scorpion, Mother Grimo, and the driver. The driver sat on the front seat. On the middle seat, which was simply a stout board resting on the edges of the wagon-sides, sat Barbe Rousseau and Mother Grimo. Behind this seat, lying down upon the floor of the wagon, rode Le Scorpion, who kept up a dismal groaning, of which the burden was:

"Oh, my eye! oh, my eye!"

And this groaning greatly delighted Mother Grimo, who would have been still better pleased to listen to the dying groans of Le Scorpion.

The chest, so precious to her, rested upon one of its sides—upon its front side, in fact, between her seat and that of the driver, and her feet and ankles rested upon the edge of the lid of the chest towards the driver. The bottom of the chest was under the board on which she and Barbe Rousseau sat.

As the bottom of the chest was fastened to the sides with screws, over the heads of which passed thin hoops of iron, it was necessary to remove the hoops to reach the screws. This Le Scorpion readily did with the burglar tools he always carried about him. At the same time, Barbe Rousseau, who knew what his confederate desired to do, and whose feet and ankles were also across the top and edge of the lid, ally fretted the chest more and more under the board, thus gradually causing an elevation of Mother Grimo's knees, without exciting her suspicions.

Working swiftly and adroitly Le Scorpion removed the bottom of the chest, and took out the box. He knew that box very well, though it had not been in his hands for years. He remembered that when he lived with his wife she always kept the valuables in that box, which was studded with small brass knobs.

In a moment he had opened the box, taken out the bundle—of the value of which he had a suspicion—the package of documents, and a large stocking stuffed with gold coins and costly gems—the latter the hoards of the miserly old woman.

All these he concealed in a rear corner of the wagon under some old rags. Then having returned the box to the chest, he fastened in the bottom, and replaced the severed iron hoops over the heads of the screws.

During all this burglarious work he did not cease to groan and cry:

"Oh, my eye! oh, my eye!" which groaning, with the clatter of the wagon-wheels over the rough stones, concealed the very slight noise he made in his labour.

At the same time, Barbe Rousseau kept the attention of Mother Grimo fixed upon himself in a brisk and exciting conversation.

In the removal of the chest from the wagon, and in conveying it to the room designed for Mother

Grimo's occupancy, Le Scorpion and Barbe Rousseau so managed it that she did not detect what had been done.

Thus the old woman did not suspect that the private box had been robbed, until, as we have seen, she rushed at it in a fury to destroy a part of its supposed contents.

Hearing the exulting yells of Le Scorpion, Mother Grimo hurried again to the trap-door, and glared down at him.

At the same moment Barbe Rousseau entered the room below, and both he and his confederate cried out, jeeringly:

"We drink health and resignation to our dearly beloved, who has lost something from her chest."

"My gold! my savings! My honest earnings!" gasped Mother Grimo, who now whined in a most piteous tone, "for the love of Heaven, do not rob me of all my savings."

"Oh," said Le Scorpion, as he opened a drawer of the table and took from it a long stocking, the foot, and nearly all the leg of which were stuffed with gold coins and gems. "Is this not a noble discovery?"

With which he slammed the precious stocking heavily upon the table.

"A royal treasure!" cried Barbe Rousseau, patting the corpulent stocking, and leaning up at the wretched old woman.

"It is mine! mine, all is my own!" screamed Mother Grimo, lying flat on the floor above, and stretching both arms towards the table, her long, lean fingers flourishing in the air. "It is mine, robbers! Give it to me! Throw it up to me. It is mine!"

"It was. Now it is ours!" sneered Le Scorpion. "Come, Barbe, let us share my dear wife's personal estate."

So saying, he laid open the stocking with a single stroke of a carving knife.

"Oh! what a fat goose!" cried Barbe Rousseau, as the coin and jewels spread about over the table. Then he and Le Scorpion began to separate the mass into equal heaps.

Whereupon Mother Grimo crept from the trap-door and knelt in the middle of the room, and lifting her shaking hands towards Heaven took an oath.

Rising at length from her knees, she crept back to the trap-door, unable to resist the desire to see the division of her lost wealth.

Le Scorpion and his confederate who had delayed making this division purposely that Mother Grimo should be tortured by beholding it, had each upon his side of the table a glittering pile, the value of which each was estimating with paper and pencil.

"It is very easy to divide the gold," said Barbe Rousseau, with his pencil between his teeth. "But how about the gems? Some are much more valuable than others which appear finer. There are diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls and sapphires."

"By right both gems and gold are mine," said Le Scorpion.

"Bah!"

"I mean it. Am I not the husband of the worthy lady up there? By law all is mine."

"Oh!" thought Mother Grimo, "if the evil one will only stir them up to cut each other's throats over it!"

"Come, that is nonsense," said Barbe Rousseau in reply to his comrade. "But for me you would never have put your hand on a coin of her money. Let us divide the gems as we have the gold—into two equal heaps—one for each. He will be the luckiest that chances to get the most valuable."

"So let it be," replied Le Scorpion. "First make one heap of all the jewels."

This was done, and then they tossed up a coin for the first choice. Le Scorpion won.

"I take this diamond," said he, selecting a very large one set in a gold ring.

"And I this cluster of diamonds," said Barbe Rousseau, selecting with care.

And thus they continued until all the gems were shared out.

"Thieves!" screamed Mother Grimo, unable longer to hold her peace. "You leave me nothing!"

"Yes, we leave you something," laughed Le Scorpion, holding up the empty stocking. "We leave you this!"

At this taunt the old woman again threw herself upon her knees, lifted her wrinkled hands to Heaven, and repeated the vow she had made. After this she threw herself upon the bed and dreamed of vengeance.

While dreaming of vengeance she sank into sleep from exhaustion of mind and body.

When she awoke another day had begun. Remembering her loss and her position she uttered a cry of rage and ran to the trap-door, which she had left open.

Le Scorpion, curled up like a sleeping centipede on the bed in the room below, was snoring.

There was another person in the room, seated at a table from which all signs of the robbed stocking had been removed. True, the empty stocking lay upon the floor, and Mother Grimo's eyes sparkled with rage as she recognised it.

Gazing at the man seated at the table she saw that he was not Barbe Rousseau, but a man with a very bald head—in fact, a head with not a hair on it.

"Oh!" cried Mother Grimo, recognising this head.

The bald head instantly turned, and gave to view a very hard, surly old face, with deep-seated eyes, that glared like two coals of fire. A glance showed that this was the face of an old sot; a fellow who lived only to drink.

"Ho! Canton!" said the old woman, as this man looked up. "What are you doing there?"

"While he sleeps I watch," replied old Canton, jerking his thumb towards Le Scorpion.

"So you are one of the jailors, are you, Canton?" asked Mother Grimo, with a sneer and a frown.

"I am anything I am paid to be," growled the old man. "The money I got for selling my shop to that young locksmith did not last long, so I came back to Lyons. I wanted to see the inside of 'The Golden Loom' again. The Golden Loom is my paradise on earth. So I came back, and that fellow Fanfan ordered me out as soon as he found I had no money. Luck of mine! I have spent a fortune at his bar. The ungrateful hound! just then an old friend of mine—we call him 'The Admiral' in the 'The Golden Loom'—"

"Oh, I know who you mean, muttered Mother Grimo. "You mean Barbe Rousseau, my brother."

"Yes, but that name is dead, you know, outside. Well, he came up, and I am in his service, to see that you do not escape, though what chance you have I can't imagine. Are you hungry?"

"Hungry? Why do you ask?"

"Because, if you are, just let down a cord, and I will tie a basket of provisions to it, and you can haul it up."

"Oh! and is it in that manner that I am to be fed?" cried the amazed old woman.

"Certainly," replied Le Scorpion, who was now awake.

"And why must my food not be delivered to me at the door of my room?"

"A scratch from that knife of yours might give death to the opener of the door, and liberty to you, my dove," replied Le Scorpion. "So, when you want food or drink, lower the rope you will find somewhere up there, and your wants will be attended to."

"And I'll starve before I do that," screamed Mother Grimo.

"Very well. I have no objection," replied Le Scorpion, turning over on his bed, and composing his long, wiry legs for another nap.

Having now disposed of Mother Grimo for the present, and leaving her in prison, let us return to the artisan.

(To be continued.)

THE FREEMASONS AND THE GREEK MASSACRE.

THE Grand Lodge of English Freemasons, originally called for the purpose of installing the Earl de Grey and Ripon in the position of Grand Master, to which he was elected some short time since—a ceremony which, as already announced, has been postponed in consequence of the mournful loss sustained by his lordship's family in the massacre by the Greek brigands—assembled at the Freemasons' hall, in accordance with the Masonic laws. The Earl of Zetland, the Grand Master, occupied the throne, and among those present were Sir Albert Woods, Mr. Llewellyn Evans, Colonel Burdett, Mr. John Havers, the Rev. E. F. Thomas, Mr. T. H. Hall, Mr. R. J. Bagshaw, Mr. John Savage, Mr. Benjamin Head, Mr. John Udall, and many other members of the craft.

After the minutes had been read by Mr. John Hervey, the Grand Secretary,

The Earl of Zetland rose and said: "Brethren, I believe it is hardly necessary for me to state that, in consequence of the most horrifying and barbarous murders which have been committed in the East, through which the most worshipful the Grand Master-elect and the Deputy Grand Master-designate, the Earl of Carnarvon, have each lost a near relative, it is found impossible to hold a Grand Festival on this day. As, however, the day is fixed by our laws, we were obliged to hold this Grand Lodge in order to get through the business of confirming the minutes of the last meeting and making them binding. It is intended to hold the festival on a future day; but that day cannot yet be named, as the funeral of one of the unfortunate gentlemen, Mr. Vyner, has yet to be celebrated in England, and our meeting cannot be held until after that mournful

ceremony. I have now to inform you that Brother Havers has my sanction to propose to you a resolution expressive of our sympathy with the noble grand Master-elect, and I will at once call upon that brother to address you."

Brother Havers then said that, after the sympathetic remarks of the Grand Master, no words were required in moving the resolution which had been intrusted to him, and which would meet with the ready acceptance of every brother, and, indeed, of every Englishman. The resolution was:—

"That this Grand Lodge has received with the deepest grief intelligence of the dreadful calamity which has befallen the Grand Master-elect, the Earl de Grey and Ripon, and his family, by the massacre of their relative at the hands of brigands in Greece, and desires to express its heartfelt sympathy and commiseration with his lordship in his sad affliction."

The motion was seconded by Brother Victor Williamson, and carried unanimously. It was also agreed that the Grand Master presiding should be requested to sign the resolution on behalf of the Grand Lodge, and transmit it to Earl de Grey and Ripon.

The Grand Master said he should be most happy to comply with the desire of the Lodge, in which he concurred very heartily. He assured the Lodge that he felt very deeply for Lord de Grey in his affliction, as he had personally known the unfortunate gentleman.

The Grand Lodge was then closed, and the meeting adjourned.

LEIGHTON HALL.

CHAPTER XIII.

Nor need we power or splendour,
Wide hall or lofty dome;
The good, the true, the tender—
These form the wealth of home. Hale.

"Oh, how pleasant and nice! Am I to sleep here?" Edna asked, as she skipped across the floor and knelt upon the hearth-rug in front of the fire. "What's become of that little room? I thought—"

She did not say what she thought, for Becky interrupted her.

Becky had gratified Edna's curiosity, and in return asked that her own should be gratified, so Edna told her that she was going to stay and get a school if she could, that her name was Louise and not Ellen, as Becky seemed to think; that all her friends were dead except one aunt, and that she was sure she should like it there very much if only she could get something to do.

"You like to work then, and so did Miss Maude, though she seems more of a lady than many I've seen what wouldn't lift a finger to fetch a thing," Becky said, and then Edna asked:

"Who is this Maude? Uncle Philip has spoken of her once or twice."

Becky liked nothing better than a bit of gossip just before going to bed. She had had it often with this same mysterious Maude, who, she said, used to occupy that very room, and whose name was Maude Somerton, from London.

"She came first to Prospect Cottage, as they call a house way up on the hills; sometimes stay with Miss Maude's aunt Burton: was once with her daughter she called Georgie, though she was a girl."

Edna was interested now, and moved a little nearer to Becky, who continued:

"I know little 'bout them Burtons, only Miss Maude was a kind of poor relation."

Here Becky paused a moment, and taking advantage of the pause, we will present our readers with a picture which Becky did not see, else she would have known just how Maude Somerton persuaded Uncle Philip to let her have a home beneath his roof.

Time, five o'clock, or thereabouts, on a warm summer afternoon. Place, a strip of meadow land belonging to Uncle Philip: *Dramatis personæ*, Uncle Philip and Maude Somerton. She, with her duties of the day over, wending her way slowly towards the small and rather uncomfortable gable-roofed house up the mountain road, where it was her fate to stay for that week, ay, for two or three weeks, judging by the number of flax-headed children, who seldom left her alone for a moment, and who each night contended for the honour of sleeping with the "governess." He, Uncle Philip, industriously raking up into mounds the fragrant hay, and casting now and then a wistful glance at a bank of clouds which threatened rain, when suddenly, across the field between the mounds of hay, and bearing swiftly down upon him, came an airy form, her blue dress held just high enough to clear the grass, and at the same time show her pretty boots and her dainty white petti-

coat, whose tucks and ruffles were the envy of all the girls, and the bane of the laundress's life.

Uncle Philip saw the apparition coming, and saw the petticoat and the well-shaped ankles, for, crusty old bachelor though he was, he used his eyes like any other man, and never lost such sights; and he thought what pretty feet Miss Somerton had, and what high-heeled boots she wore, and wondered why she was coming towards him in such hot haste.

"Most likely some of those Beals' boys have been raisin' Cain, and so she comes to me as counsellor. I'll throw up the office, for I can't have women runnin' after me this way," he thought, and pretending not to see the young girl, now so near to him, he kept on with his raking until right before his very face came the vision of blue and white, and a little fat, dimpled hand was laid upon his rake, and a pair of soft, blue eyes looked up into his with something like tears in them, while a pleading voice told him how terrible it was to be a daily governess, to eat cold mutton every day, to be always called on to receive company, and never feel at home; besides, what was worse than all the rest, having from one to three children fighting to sleep with you every night, when you wanted so much to be alone at least a portion of the time. And then, still grasping the rake, she asked if she might stay altogether at his house, where everything was so nice and cool and quiet, and she could have a room to herself, undisturbed by children.

"You will, I know you will, Mr. Overton?" and Maude stopped for his reply.

Uncle Philip was more astounded than he had been when asked by Edna to kiss her. Of his own accord he would quite as soon have taken a young alligator into his family as a girl, or a woman; but there was something about this one standing there before him, and now actually grasping his hand instead of the rake, which completely unmanned him. Those eyes, and the touch of the white fingers clinging so closely to his own, could not be resisted, and with a quick, nervous motion, he began to step backwards and sideways and then forwards, ejaculating meanwhile:

"Lord bless me—yes, yes. Let go my rake. This is sudden."

He then replied to her repeated question—"May I stay with you, Mr. Overton?"—in this manner: "Yes, yes, I s'pose you'll have to, if Becky is willin'." I'll see her to-night and let you know."

He said this last by way of giving himself a chance to draw back, for already he began to repent, and feel how terrible it would be to have a young woman in his house constantly—to-day, to-morrow, and next day, and he brought up Becky as the pack-horse who was to carry the burden of his refusal on the morrow. But Maude outwitted him there.

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" she cried. "You are the dearest man in the world. Becky is all right. I saw her first, and she said if you were willing she was. I shall move this very day, for I cannot and will not stay with Mrs. Higgins another hour. Thank you again, ever so much, you dear, darling man."

She was tripping off across the fields, leaving the enemy totally routed and vanquished and dizzy-headed, as he tried to think how many more weeks there were before vacation.

"Nine, ten, twelve!" he fairly groaned. "I can't stand it. I won't stand it. I'll put a stop to it—see if I don't. Yes, yes; to have them boots troddin' up and down the stairs, and them petticoats whiskin' through the doors. I'll go crazy—I feel like it now."

Then he tried raking hay; then he tried cooling his feet in a brook near by; but nothing was of avail to drive away "that feelin'," and long before sunset he left his work and wended his way homeward.

The enemy was there before him, or, at least, a part of her equipments, for two of the Higgins' boys had brought home Maude's satchel, and sunshade, and water-proof, and two or three books, and a pair of overshoes, all of which were on the table, while the boys were swinging on the gate in the front.

Uncle Philip ordered the boys home, and "the traps" up in the little "back chamber."

"That'll start her. She'll find that worse than sleepin' with the Higginses," he thought, as he gave the order. "He had an awful headache," he said to Becky, when she inquired what was the matter; and his headache increased and sent him to bed before Maude arrived, flushed, delighted, and full of spirits that her penance was over.

He heard her go up to her little hot back room, and wondered how she liked it, and how long she'd stay in it, and half wished that he had nailed the window down so she could not open it.

She was up bright and early the next morning, and drove the cows to their pasture, a distance of half a mile, and brought back a bunch of flowers, which she arranged upon the table; and she looked so fresh and pretty in her blue gown, which just

matched her eyes, and ate her breakfast so heartily, that Uncle Philip began to relent, and that night she slept in the north-west room instead of the little back one. There she staid a whole week; and then, after having helped Uncle Philip rake up his hay one day when a shower was coming on, she was promoted to the north, and best chamber, and some nice striped matting was bought for the floor, and a pretty bedroom suite took the place of the high-post bedstead and old-fashioned bureau; and some curtains were hung at the windows.

And here, for weeks, Maude reigned, a very queen, and cheered and brightened up the old farmhouse until in the autumn she left and went back to Oakwood.

And this was how Maude Somerton chanced to be inmate of Uncle Philip's family, and enshrined in his heart as well as in old Becky's, as a kind of divinity, whom it was not so very wrong to worship.

"Seems like we never could get over hankerin' after her," Becky said to Edna, "she was so lively, and made the house so different."

Edna was longing to ask another question, but did not quite know how to get at it. At last she said:

"Does Miss Somerton live in London always? Has her Aunt Burton no country residence?"

"Yes, bless you, a house as big as four of this, down to Oakwood, where thar's looking-glasses as long as you be, Miss Maude said, and furniture all covered with satin."

Edna was no nearer her point than before, and so she tried again.

"Have they any neighbours at Oakwood, any families they are intimate with?"

"Yes, there's the Leightons, to my way of thinkin' quite as proud as the Burtons, and their place, Miss Maude says, is handsomer and bigger than the one at Oakwood."

"Oh, indeed! Mrs. Leighton must be a happy woman. Did you ever see her?" Edna asked, and Becky replied, "There ain't no Miss Leighton, she's Miss Churchill, married twice; her oldest son, Mr. Roy, owns the property, and is the nicest man you ever see. He staid at the hotel once a few weeks, and I done his washin', as he couldn't find nobody handy."

"Yes," Edna said, musingly, more intent upon another matter than Roy Leighton's washing. "Yes, I suppose he must be very rich? Is he the only child?"

"No-o," Becky spoke a little scornfully, while Edna moved so as to hide her burning face.

She had reached the point at last, and her heart beat almost audibly as she listened to Becky, who continued:

"Leastways, he wasn't the only child when they was here. There was a younger one, a Charles Churchill, who got killed on the railroad. You should speak well of the dead, and I mean to, but he wasn't of so much 'count in these here parts as Master Roy."

"Did he do anything bad?" Edna asked, and her voice was very low and sad.

"No, not bad, only wasn't of much 'count," Becky said. "He druv fast horses, and smoked allday, and bragged about his money when he hadn't a shilling, and flirted with the girls awfully. There's Miss Ruth Gardner, all of three years older than him, thought she could catch him sure, and little Marcia Belknap was fairly bewitched, and both on 'em cried when they heard he was dead, though he left a wife, the papers said, he had married that very day."

"Oh, dreadful!" and Edna groaned aloud, for she saw again that awful scene, and the white, still face upturned to the angry sky, and it seemed wrong to sit there and make no sign while Becky went on:

"I hain't seen Miss Maude since, so I don't know nothin' about his wife, who she was, nor where she is. Down at the Leighton-place, may be, though it's been surmised that she wasn't much—rather poor, I've heard, and if that's so, Miss Churchill ain't a goin' to own her, 'cos she's turned up her nose at Miss Ruth, and took her boy home to git shut of her. But Miss Ruth is enough for her, and I've heard she talked awful about that wife of Charlie's, and said she jest wished she could see her long enough to tell her she had the best and first right to her husband."

Edna's hands were locked firmly together, and the nails were making red marks upon her flesh, while she longed for Becky to leave her. She had heard enough, and she looked so white and tired that Becky noticed it at last, and asked if she was ill.

"No, only tired," she said; and then Becky said "Good night," and left her alone with her sad thoughts, which, however, were not all sad and bitter.

She had lost her first love in more ways than one, and as, with her head bent down, she sat thinking of him and all she had heard, she felt a fresh pang of remorse cut through her heart at her own callousness in feeling that perhaps for herself it was better

that Charlie had died. But only for herself. When she thought of him, and what he might perhaps have been had space for repentance been granted him, her tears flowed like rain, and, prone upon her face, she prayed that if the prayers of the living for the dead could avail, hers might be heard and answered for her lost, wayward Charlie.

CHAPTER XIV.

Kindness has resistless charms,
All things else but weakly move;
Fiercest anger it disarms,
And clips the wings of flying love.

Rochester.

To the young and healthy sleep comes easily, and so, in spite of her excitement, Edna slept soundly in her new home; and when the first signs of daylight began to be visible in her room, and she heard sounds of life below, she arose with a feeling nearer akin to happiness than she had known before since Charlie died. Becky soon appeared, chiding her for getting up before her fire was made, and finally coaxing her back to bed, while she kindled a blazing fire upon the hearth, and then brought a huge pitcher of hot water for her young lady's ablutions. Breakfast would be ready in half an hour, she said, as she left the room; and then Edna rose again, and remembering what Uncle Philip had said about her grandmother's hair, and inferring therefrom that he liked curls, she brushed and arranged her own thick tresses in masses of wavy curls, which fell upon her neck and brightened up the deep black of her dress.

Uncle Philip said he liked to see a fresh young face at his table, and he found one there when he came in from the barn: and after bidding Edna good morning, said, softly, as he laid his hand on her flowing hair:

"Wear it so always, Louise; it makes me think of my sister."

"I am going to town," he said, when breakfast was over, "to see what I can do towards getting up a school."

He gave Edna a knowing wink and then rode off.

Long before noon everybody in town knew that the strange young lady in black was Miss Louise Overton, Philip's niece, who wanted to set up a school and could teach music and drawing, and everything, and Miss Ruth Gardner's name was actually down as a pupil in drawing, while Squire Gardner headed the list with his two youngest children as day scholars in case Miss Overton should succeed in getting up a school. It was a stroke of policy on Philip's part to get the Gardners interested, especially Miss Ruth, whose name as a pupil in drawing was the direct means of gaining several more, Marcia Belknap's with the others; so that when at noon Uncle Philip went home to dinner, it was settled, or nearly so, that a select school should be opened at once in one of the rooms of the old academy, Uncle Philip pledging himself to see that it was thoroughly cleaned and put in order, as well as to supplying all the necessary fuel. Twenty scholars were promised sure, and several more were doubtful, and Uncle Philip rode home in great spirits, and then went in to Edna:

He told her that Miss Ruth was to call on her that afternoon, and see some of her drawings and talk it over with her.

Miss Ruth was a rather sensible, if romantic kind of girl, very proud and exclusive, and at first somewhat disposed to patronise "Miss Overton," whose personal appearance she mentally criticised, deciding that she was very young and rather pretty, or would be if she only had more style. Style was a kind of mania with Ruth, who, being very plain, said frankly, that "as she could not be handsome, she would be stylish, which was next best to beauty," and so she studied fashion, and went to the extreme of everything, with something new every month, and carried matters with a high hand, and queened it over all the young people, whom she alternately noticed and snubbed, and did more to help Edna by being a pupil herself than any six other young ladies could have done. She liked Edna from the first, and liked her the more because she fancied her to be suffering from some other cause than the mere loss of friends. "A love affair, most likely," she thought, and as one who knew how to sympathise in such matters, she took a great interest in her young teacher, and ere long waxed somewhat confidential, and once when speaking of marriage, said with a sigh and a downcast look in her gray eyes, that "her first and only love was dead, that the details of his death were too dreadful to narrate, and had made so strong an impression upon her that it was not at all probable she should ever marry now."

And Edna listened with burning cheeks, and bent her head lower over the drawing she was making from memory of a bit of landscape seen from Aunt Letitia's upper windows. Edna stood somewhat in awe of Miss Ruth, with all her dash and style, and flights of fancy, but from the mo-

ment little Marcia Belknap called and looked at her with her great, dreamy eyes, and spoke with her sweet low voice, she was the young girl's sworn friend; and when the two grew so intimate that Marcia, who was also given to sentiment and fancies, and had a penchant for blighted hopes and broken hearts, told the teacher one night, just as Ruth had done, of her dead love, Edna caressed the bowed head of the young girl, and longed to tell her how foolish she was, and how the lost fruit, if gathered, would have proved but an apple of Sodom.

"Charlie was not worthy of so much trust," was the sad refrain ever repeating itself in her heart, until at last the old soreness began to give way, and she felt that the blow which had severed his life from hers had also set her free from a load she would have found hard to bear as the years went on, and she saw more and more the terrible mistake she had made.

The school was a great success, thanks to Uncle Philip, who worked incessantly to get her scholars, and who drove her each day to and from the academy, while Becky vied with him in caring for and petting her young mistresses, who bid fair to rival even Maude herself in the affections of the quaint old couple. And Edna was very happy. Her school, including her pupils in drawing, was bringing her in over thirty pounds a quarter, and as she had no outgoing expenses she was confidently expecting to lessen her debt to Roy in the spring, besides sending Aunt Letitia a draught which should surprise her.

As soon as her prospects were certain she wrote to that worthy woman a long letter, full of Uncle Philip, the best man in the world, and the queerest, and then, word for word, she gave his invitation for Aunt Letitia to visit him.

"I have no idea she'll come," Edna said to herself as she folded up the letter, "but maybe she will feel better for the invitation."

And she did, though the expression of her face was a study for an instant, as over her lone evening fire with only Tabby for company, Mrs. Pepper read her niece's letter. She did not exactly swear as Uncle Philip had done, when he first heard her name and knew that Edna was her niece, but she involuntarily apostrophised the same personage, though addressing him by another name. "A perceptible pallor crept into her face, as, snuffing her tallow candle, she looked again to see if she had read aright."

Yes, she had, for there it was in black and white. Philip Overton was Edna's great-uncle, to whom in her distress she had gone, and he had taken her as his daughter, and given her his name, and sent a friendly message to her, Letitia Pepper, asking her to visit him, and couching his invitation in language so characteristic of the man. She sent more than a quart of milk that night to the minister's wife, whose girl, as usual, came for it, and wondered, with her mistress, to find her pail so full, and seemed so softened every day, that Captain Brown, a widower of ten years' standing, whose fields joined Aunt Letitia's on one side, ventured to offer to see her home, it was so dark and lonesome. But she nearly snapped his head off with her disdainful "Thank you, sir; I'm able to take care of myself," and started for her home, where, before she slept, she wrote a letter to Edna, telling her "she was glad to know she was so well provided for, and hoped she would behave herself and keep the right side of her uncle." The letter closed with—"Thank your uncle for inviting me to his house, but tell him I prefer my own bed and board to anybody else's: I've toughed it out these thirty years, and guess I can stand it a spell longer."

Uncle Philip brought the letter to Edna, and then without seeming to do so, watched her while she read it.

"What does the Pepper-corn say?" he asked, when Edna had finished reading it, "or maybe you wouldn't mind letting me see for myself. I own to a good deal of curiosity about this woman."

Edna hesitated a moment, and then reflecting that the letter was quite a kind, friendly epistle for Aunt Letitia to write, gave it to Uncle Philip, who, putting on his glasses, read it through carefully.

Then, when he reached the reply to his invitation to visit him, he laughed so long and loud, that Edna looked at him with a half fear lest he had suddenly gone mad. But he had not, and after a little time he handed the letter back, saying as he did so:

"Tough old crab, isn't she? Game to the last." Edna made no reply, for something in his manner made her sorry that she had shown him Aunt Letitia's letter, and she resolved never to do it again. She had written to Jack Heyford, telling him of the change in her name and prospects, and her proximity to Charlie's friends, and Jack had replied in a long, kind, brotherly letter, in which he told her that George was at present with him.

"Annie is better," he wrote, "but we fear will never be able to walk again without the aid of crutches. She talks of you a great deal, and wonders where you are. I have not told her of your letter. I thought it better not to do so with George here, as I fancy that uncle of yours has some good reason for not wishing the Leightons to know where you are, or who you are, at present. I am thinking of changing my quarters from London to Jersey, where I have a chance in an insurance company, but nothing is decided yet. Will let you know as soon as it is; and if we do remove to Jersey, and you will let me, I shall come to see you, as there is something I wish to say to you, which I would rather not put on paper. I was in your neighbourhood once for a day with Roy Leighton some years ago; his mother was at the hotel there, and George was there too. Strange how matters get mixed up, is it not?"

Jack signed himself, "yours truly," nothing more, but something in the tone of his letter set Edna's heart beating unpleasantly, as she wondered what it was Jack Heyford had to say to her which he would rather not commit to paper.

And next day the carrier came to the old farmhouse and deposited various packages marked for "Miss Overton." The box which contained it had "London" marked upon it; and Edna felt a keen pang of regret, as she thought how much of self-denial this present must have cost the generous Jack, and how poorly she could repay it. Another package from Aunt Letitia, containing the promised book of sermons, and a pair of lamb's-wool stockings—"knit every stitch myself and shaped to my own legs," Aunt Letitia wrote; adding, "in reference to a small square box which was sent to me by Roy Leighton, who deigned to say they was for his sister, Mrs. Charles Churchill—a gift from himself; and he wanted me to give them to you, if I knew where you was, as he supposed of course I did by this time; and wanted me, too, to give him your address. Maybe you'll think I did wrong; very likely you will, but I just wrote to him that I'd got the box, and would see that you had it—that you was taking care of yourself and earning money to pay your debts, and inasmuch as you did not write to him, it was fair to suppose that you wanted to stay incog., and I should let you. You can write to him if you want to."

This was what Edna read; and then, in a trice, she opened the box, which contained a full set of beautiful jets—bracelets, ear-rings, pin, chain, and all—with a note from Roy, who called her "My dear little sister," and asked her to accept the ornaments as a gift from her "brother Roy." There was a warm, happy feeling in Edna's heart for the remainder of that day, and more than once she found herself repeating the words: "My dear little sister." They were constantly in her mind, both at home and on the way to Milville, where the soft wind, which told of rain not far away, whispered them in her ears as it brushed her hair in passing. But as her heart grew warmer with the memory of those words written by Roy Leighton, so the little hands clasped together inside Jack Heyford's muff grew colder as Edna wished he had not sent it, and thought of the something he was to say when he came.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

THE medical examiner for an insurance company has found a man whose heart is on the right side, and calls it an extraordinary case.

COMPULSORY ENJOYMENT.

A gentleman who frequented the circus, noticed a boy among the audience who was sound asleep every time he was there. Curious to know why the urchin should resort to such a place for somniferous purposes our friend went up one evening and accosted him thus:—

"My little fellow, what do you go to sleep for?"

"I can't keep awake," rejoined the other; "it is such a terrible bore to see them doing the same things every night."

"But why do you come?"

"Oh, I can't help it—I must come—I've got a season ticket!"

A LADY from the country who has lately become a resident of this city was very much troubled at her son's long absence from home the other evening. A neighbour calling suggested that the boy had gone to see the elephant—"Ah!" said the mother, with a sigh of relief, "why didn't he tell me? I have no objections to him in seeing the elephant, and didn't even know it was in town."

TAKING HIM AT HIS WORD.—An auctioneer exclaimed: "Why, really, ladies and gentlemen, I am giving these things away!" "Are you?" said an old lady present; "well, I'll thank you for that silver pitcher you have in your hand."

THE DARK AGES.—"The boy at the head of the class will state what were the dark ages of the

world." Boy hesitates. "Next—Master Smith, can't you tell what the dark ages were?" "I guess they were the ages just before the invention of spectacles." "Go to your seats."

A MAN got so deep in debt that not one of his creditors has been able to see him for months.

WHY is a proud woman like a music book? She is full of airs.

SOME rash fellow says that the giving of the ballot to women would not amount to much, for none of them would admit that they were old enough to vote until they were too old to take any interest in politics.

To be a woman of fashion is one of the easiest things in the world. A late writer thus describes it:—"Buy everything you don't want, and pay for nothing; you get; smile on all mankind but your husband; be happy everywhere but at home."

A CARD DELIVERY COMPANY WANTED.

How we should all be blest if something could be done to expedite the interchange of ordinary civilities! For instance, what can be more irksome than making morning calls on folks you only care to meet as evening acquaintances? How conversation languishes upon these sad occasions, and what a waste of time and temper such formalities occasion! How everybody hopes to hear that everybody else is announced as "not at home," and with what relief the card-case is produced, and a corner is turned down to show the call has been made personally! It is not thought "the thing" to send one's card by post, or this would be an easy way of morning-call making. But what a blessing it would be were a company established for social card delivery, and were such an agency admitted by society as being a correct equivalent for calling.

To make the thing genteel, the servants of the company might all be dressed in livery, and for ultra-swallow society they might even wear hair-powder, for which an extra charge would doubtless willingly be paid. Messengers on foot might serve perhaps for central and suburban districts, such as Horseay, and Woburnia, and Ielington, and Hackney; while in Bayswater, Belgravia, and other fashionable neighbourhoods, the cards might be distributed in well-appointed vehicles, which should bear the semblance of being private carriages, and in no manner betray either their hiring or their use. —Punch.

"THE SERVANTS!"

James: "Well, I wish my old woman would make haste! I want my luncheon!"

Charles: "If she's got chatterin' along o' my gals, shan't see her this 'alf-our, dessey!" *[Overheard and mentally noted by her ladyship, who was close behind.]* —Punch.

A NEW DISCOVERY IN DANCING.

The French have odd ideas of pleasure. Look how some of them were pleased to amuse themselves the other evening at a ball in Paris:—

"There was a cotillon, in which the candidate for a partner had to go through a stove and put his head in a hole which was closed by a dishcover. The lady took off the cover, and if she liked the plat, she ordered him up hot."

If not, we may suppose that the gentleman dishcovered would probably be dishd. Well, there is no accounting, certainly, for tastes; but, if to get a dance we put our head under a dishcover, we would give our friends permission to consider us a spoon. —Punch.

MEAN TIME.

Porter (loudly): "Hi! Bill! What time does the parliamentary to town arrive 'ere—gent wants to know!" *[Very pleasant for that mean fellow Bertie (who wanted to sneak up on the cheap) to have the query shouted out before all the party from the castle.]* —Fun.

WHEEL, WO!

The velocipedestrians are not to have it all their own way:—

At the Westminster police-court, a youth has been convicted and fined 5s. for riding a velocipede recklessly and furiously through the public streets, "to the common danger." This is said to have been the first conviction for an offence which, in all parts of the metropolis, has now become extensively prevalent.

It is time that reckless riders learnt that their own peculiar bicycles are not to interfere with the common wheel. —Fun.

NOISE OR MUSIC.

The Musical Standard has not quite seen the point here:—

"It is never too early to follow a bad example! Correspondents now tell us of popgun-cum-bells-cum-anvil accompaniments introducing themselves as a means of attraction in country concerts."

Sensible people like music; fools like noise. Fools are in the majority, and will approve of popgun-cum-bells-cum-anvil clamour without any example, out of sheer "cussedness." Because you see ten donkeys and twenty geese on a common, you don't conclude that nine of the first and nineteen of the second fol-

lowed the example of the odd one. They were led thither by their common folly. —Fun.

CRISPIN'S LAST.

"About women's rights," says he, "there's a great deal of useless talk. And then nobody says anything about women's lefts. Now, it's my opinion that lefts are as hard to fit as rights, especially with widows and single women. And as for suffrage, women suffer most from having too little sole and too much heel. Mill, to be sure! He may be well enough on the Floss, but he's not much on leather, believe that!"

THE RIGHT WAY OF TAKING IT.—To liquor up is the usual expression, but to liquor down would seem to be the more correct one. —Punch.

A LABOURER'S SONG.

I'm a working man, and I own it;
I seek to conceal it from none;
If I once had the whim, I've outgrown it,
And even all trace of it's gone.

I can talk of my trade and my labour
As proudly (though wanting the gloss)
As my titled omnipotent neighbour
Dilates on his deeds and his cross.

Though I see many men who grow richer
Each day and each hour that goes by,
I'm content with my pay as a ditcher,
That serves my few wants to supply.

With my wife and my children around me,
At evening, drawn close to the fire,
I feel as if fortune had crowned me
With all that a man need desire.

And I carol as blithely as any,
As gay and light-hearted, I trow,
Though grim-looking shadows a many
Have darkened our threshold ere now.

I consume not my soul with ambition,
But labour contentedly on;
And though some claim a far higher mission,
Mine's haply as useful a one. J. W.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

BREAKFAST DISHES.—Omelette with or without herbs, and a layer of minced mutton or other meat is a favourite dish for breakfast. Also sandwiches, made of hot toast and bacon between, with or without anchovy paste. A young rabbit cut up and fried is much liked. Minced mutton or beef, with bread-crumbs and clarified butter, salamandered, also make a change, in addition to kidneys and the remains of poultry and game, which all come in for breakfast dishes.

SALADS.—As a salad, dandelion leaves have great value. Although much used abroad, the plant is little appreciated here, as indeed many others might enter into our dietaries. At this season of the year, salads constitute valuable articles of diet. They are recommended not only on account of their cooling and refreshing taste, but chiefly from their containing mineral matters, which are so essential to the maintenance of health. These mineral matters consist principally of salts of potassium and sodium. When vegetables are boiled, a certain portion of their mineral constituents is extracted by the water, and hence the practice of eating uncooked vegetables and fruit is a most wholesome one, as furnishing the system with saline matters, which are much needed. The following plants are used as salads in this country:—beet, celery, endive, garden cress, lettuce, radish, and water-cress. To this list might be judiciously added the leaves of: the dandelion, lamb's lettuce, or corn-salad, sorrel, and many other wild plants, which through ignorance or prejudice are at present despised. In making salads it will be found an improvement to use the leaves tolerably dry, to add a fair quantity of good oil, and not drench with vinegar, as is too often done.

STATISTICS.

AUSTRIAN SUGAR.—The following shows the amount of sugar produced in Austria between August and December, 1869, as compared with the same period in 1868:—Lower Austria, 418,052 cwt. in 1869 against 531,055 cwt. in 1868; Bohemia, 10,791,988 against 6,622,704; Moravia, 5,630,731 against 4,877,486; Silesia, 1,406,551 against 1,228,846; Galicia, 311,640 against 254,428; making a total of 18,629,862 cwt. in 1869 against 13,514,519 cwt. in 1868. Of the above, 308,935 cwt. of raw sugar and 90,414 cwt. of refined sugar were exported.

NAVAL STORES.—On the first day of this year there was in store at Deptford yard a stock of 68,325 pints of essence beef, a quantity which, judging from the issues of in 1869, will last seven

years. There were also 602 quarts of pickles, which by the above rule, will last four years; 20,808 bottles of white wine, which will last above six years; 43,700lb. of saloon candles for transport, which will last nearly 11 years; 6,510 foot-pieces for men's stockings, enough for 50 years; 29,352 yards of blue cloth, No. 2, enough for nearly eight years; 6,897 flushing jackets, No. 1, a store for 13 years; 14,789 comforters, which will last four years; 371,046 yards of striped shirting, which will last five years; and 72,914 yards of towelling, which will last seven years.

THE CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS.—The churchwardens' annual accounts for the year ending March, 1870 which have been submitted to the Eastern Vestry have recently been issued, from which it appears that the amount received during the year on account of parochial rates was 2,609l. 8s. 9d.; on account of voluntary rates, 1,449 12s. 7d.; and on cemetery account, 555l. 6s. 7d., making a total of 4,614l. 7s. 11d. The total expenditure amounted to 3,596l. 10s. 9d., leaving a balance to the credit of the parish of 1,017l. 17s. 2d. The expenditure upon the churches during the year, out of the parochial rate, was 1,504l. viz., 460l. on St. Peter's, 460l. on St. Nicholas's, 325l. 13s. 5d. on St. Paul's, and 299l. 6s. 7d. on St. John's.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THIRTEEN Roman altars have been dug up near Maryport.

THE village of Broadclyst, about four miles from Exeter, the property of Sir Thomas Acland, has been almost totally destroyed by fire, only eighteen houses out of seventy-seven remaining. The sparks from the chimney of an inn which was on fire are supposed to have originated it.

WASTE PIPES IN CISTERNS.—In making the sanitary examination of the Highgate Schools, it was discovered that the waste-pipes communicated directly with the drains, and that the water was contaminated in consequence. Twenty-seven children have been treated in the Fever Hospital.

THE CITY OF BOSTON.—A Central Press telegraph states that a thin slip of wood, three feet long, painted blue, was picked up at Porron Porth, on the north coast of Cornwall on Sunday; and in large letters cut in the wood was written, "City of Boston is sinking; February 11th." Another sentence, commencing with the letter "M," appears to have been begun, but the board is broken off.

THERE will be no less than six regiments of cavalry at Aldershot this drill season—the 2nd Life Guards, the 3rd Dragoon Guards, 7th Dragoon Guards, Inniskilling Dragoons, 10th Hussars, and 12th Lancers. Three of our best and very keenest cavalry officers with their splendid regiments will form part of the cavalry brigade—Colonel Oakes, Colonel Marshall and Colonel Baker; so great things may be expected in the way of cavalry manoeuvres this season.

A NEW Town Hall with city offices are about to be erected in Winchester, on the site where the Globe Inn now stands. It appears that only thirteen out of the twenty-four members of the Council are in favour of the proposal, and the choice of the site is described as "a miserable sacrifice of the interests and future of the city to petty and personal interests and ward jealousies," as it is a situation in a decaying part of the borough from which trade and civic life have departed.

INSANITY AS A DEFENCE.—A curious illustration of the danger of setting up the defence of insanity has occurred across the Atlantic. A certain lawyer laboured hard for a client arraigned on a capital charge. They succeeded in obtaining an acquittal on the ground of insanity. But during these proceedings they took from the prisoner a mortgage of his property to secure the costs. The prisoner, being found insane by the jury, soon afterwards recovered the senses which he was supposed to have lost. The lawyers sought to realise their mortgage, but their late client set up the defence of insanity at the time of the mortgage, and judgment was given in his favour.

THE GRECIAN BEND AND HAIR DYE.—Mr. Norman Tate, in the course of the last of his lectures on "Home Chemistry," speaking of the "people we meet" in connexion with the "clothes we wear," pointed out how high-heeled boots and the "Grecian bend" were doing much to destroy the healthy action and symmetry of the body, while the fashion which many young ladies had of emulating wasps in the size of their waists was a most dangerous fashion and had a most injurious tendency, whether considered chemically or physiologically. The treatment of hair with different dyes was another evil practice to be avoided, and he urged upon parents and guardians to do their utmost to check such things, for they could not be used without decided injury to those who used them.

CONTENTS.

	Page
YORK SCARLETT ...	49
SCIENCE ...	52
THE SOLAR TEMPERA ...	53
TURE ...	52
LATEST EXCAVATIONS IN ...	52
POMPEII ...	52
FAITHFUL MARGARET ...	53
THE VEILED LADY ...	55
STONIO ...	57
MYSTERY OF THE BLACK ...	61
DIAMOND ...	61
A ROMAN BRITON ...	64
THE CHIME OF GREEKS ...	64
PROPOSED CHANGE IN ...	64
RAILWAY TAXATION ...	64
THE COAL TRADE ...	64
STRIKES IN FRANCE ...	64
DANIEL MACLURE, R.A. ...	63
THE LOCKSMITH OF ...	66
LYONS ...	66
THE FREEMASONS AND ...	63
GREEK MASSACRE ...	63

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

Page

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BERTHA.—Handwriting peculiar, but very legible.
 AGNES.—Handwriting very good.
 C. G.—Handwriting good.
 KATIE.—The handwriting is very nice.
 JEAN T.—Handwriting moderately good.
 C. M. B.—The tales are declined, being unsuitable.
 ANOTHER CONSTANT READER.—The volunteer uniform referred to is that of the Queen's (Westminster).
 T. F. S.—Very good and amusing; yet not quite good enough for publication.
 BETTA.—There is a white enamel sold for the purpose, which is obtainable at most of the chemists' shops.
 A WIDOW.—You cannot prevent a sediment from forming. When it has formed you will of course disperse it in the ordinary way.
 J. B.—Your art is in very little request amongst the Royal Engineers; in other respects also you appear to be not qualified for that corps.
 A CONSTANT READER.—The law does not permit you to marry again during the lady's life, for she is indeed your wife, and you are liable to support her.
 M. A.—After washing them in warm water, apply every night glycerine and rose water mixed in equal quantities.
 TIM.—The smoky flavour observable in some whiskeys arises from peat being used instead of coal in the process of distillation.
 E. J.—Most of the precious stones are found in the East. The ruby is principally obtained from the sands of the rivers in Ceylon.
 N. T.—The present Princess of Wales enjoys the title in virtue of her marriage. Mary, daughter of Henry VIII., was created Princess of Wales in her own right.
 A CLERK.—No: Possession, it is true, is nine points of the law, but a good title to the property will prevail over them all, and enable the holder in favour of him with whom is the right.
 JEAN T.—The subjects in which candidates for admission to the Exchequer are examined, are writing from dictation, and arithmetic, including vulgar and decimal fractions. The age is from nineteen to twenty-five.
 C. H. and A. M.—We are sorry we have not room for the lines, the perusal of which has afforded us pleasure. There is reason to congratulate you upon your powers of description, and your poetical instinct.
 LILLY.—Stretch the engraving tightly over box-wood sold for the purpose, so that the face of the engraving comes in contact with the wood. Then apply pressure by means of a burnisher.
 STEPHANO.—The edges are dipped into a composition made according to the pattern required. It is a process which requires some skill, and can be satisfactorily performed only by an experienced hand.
 ANXIOUS ONE.—Take a mild aperient once or twice a week. Let the diet be generous, consisting of fresh meat and vegetables. Eat any ripe fruit that is in season, and drink lemon-juice mixed with water.
 G. T.—Handwriting good. Under the circumstances you should be discreet in the use of the cold bath. An occasional dip might be beneficial, and would enable you to judge as to the expediency of a repetition of the practice.
 F. P. A.—Upon a separation between husband and wife, the law gives the husband the custody of the infant children. They cannot be removed from his care, unless it be proved that his moral character is so bad as to render him unfit for the charge.
 TWO CONSTANT READERS.—Soap is made of soda and kitchen fat, or any other greasy substance, boiled together. After a good boiling, the colouring matter is added, and then the mixture is cast into moulds, and when hard, cut up or separated.
 ABEL.—The lines are from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," and are often quoted by those who, upon principle, are opposed to emigration. But although some millions have sailed from our shores from time to time, there are enough left—indeed, the loss is not felt.
 MACKAY.—Plants and trees absorb the moisture from the earth, which would otherwise appear in miasmatic vapours. Vegetable action produces oxygen and frees the air from taint, so that the multiplication of trees, shrubs, and plants increases the vital principle of the air and helps to get rid of its impurities. All trees are of course not alike in taste and constitution. Those which are deciduous, with large woolly or hairy leaves, are not suited for towns; the particles of carbon which float in

the air, resting on the leaves, often destroy them. Pines and firs require a pure air. The lime, plane, yew, cedar, and chestnut are amongst the trees that will thrive in towns. Low, marshy lands are greatly improved by heavy cropping.

M. N. B.—For freckles mix together ten grains of sub-carbonate of potash, fifteen grains of powdered borax, one ounce of strained lemon-juice, half a teaspoonful of glycerine, and half a pint of elder flower water. Apply the mixture with a clean sponge two or three times a day.

ALPHA.—From your statement, it appears that were you to endeavour to obtain a patent you could not succeed. Your friend lived in England, and therefore you cannot obtain a patent for an invention communicated to you by him. A patent is granted to the true and first inventor.

GRANBY.—Tea was first introduced into England about two hundred years ago, and the price at that period was sixty shillings per pound. The first coffee-house in London is said to have been opened near Lombard Street in 1652. Sugar has been known from the earliest times, and is said to have been brought into Europe from Asia in the seventh century.

T. F. S.—1. The word lucifer, as applied to lucifer-matches, is derived from the Latin word *lucifer*, a light, and *ferre*, I bear. They came into use in 1834, and in 1848 some improvements in the manufacture were invented by Mr. E. Partridge. 2. *Primer* is correct. 3. There are various Latin grammars by different authors published in England. 4. We gave the receipt in No. 364. 5. Handwriting good.

BERTHA E.—A man may cherish the memory of a deceased lady from other motives than those of love, such for instance, as respect, esteem, and reverence. Then as to your remarks about beauty: while they are generally true, it must not be forgotten that the mind and the soul are manifested to some extent in the expression of the face; so that you cannot disconnect the material from the spiritual. A lover often finds beauties unperceived by other eyes.

LILIAN.—After you have gathered a quantity of roses, place them in a large jar. Then pour upon them some spring water. Having covered the top of the jar with thin muslin to keep out the dust, expose it to the heat of the sun for a few days until you observe oily particles floating on the surface of the water. Take off this oily substance and place it in a bottle, when you will find that you have distilled the perfume known as "Otto of Roses."

REMEMBRANCE.
 I think of thee when morning springs
 From sleep, with plumage bath'd in dew,
 And, like a young bird, lifts its wings
 Of gladness in the welkin blue;
 And when, at noon, the breath of love
 O'er flower and stream is wandering free,
 And sent in music from the grove,
 I think of thee—I think of thee.
 And when the moon's sweet crescent strings
 In light o'er heaven's wide, waveless sea,
 And stars show forth, like blessed things,
 I think of thee—I think of thee. G. D. P.

MARIE.—It is certainly the general opinion that "ghosts" are fabulous beings, an opinion with which we coincide. But what argument can you possibly place before a sensible individual who maintains that he has seen a ghost? If his character compels you to give him credit for bona fide, you can but admit that his experience transcends yours, and in discussing the possibility of his having been mistaken, you feel obliged to acknowledge, with Dr. Johnson, that "appearances are in their favour."

CHARLES.—A cubic foot of rain water at 60deg. Fah. weighs 997.137oz. avoirdupois. The average weight of sea water at the same temperature is 1,025oz.: that of the Dead Sea 1,240oz. The temperature of greatest density of rain water is 38.3deg., and between that and 62deg. it varies but one part in one thousand. It is generally assumed (for convenience of calculation) that a cubic foot of rain water at 38.3deg. Fah. weighs 1,000oz.

COWPER.—A comparatively small quantity of alum will clear muddy water. A piece as small as a hazel nut, or even less, according to the impurity of the water, will precipitate the dirty colouring matter in a salutary water. It has simply to be dissolved, stirred, and left to settle. This method is frequently adopted along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. In the manufacture of lakes used in painting, the dissolved colouring matter is precipitated by alum. All this rests upon the peculiar property of alum to combine, when in solution, with the most foreign particles in suspension or even solution.

BETA.—The simplest method of obtaining a true meridian line for a sun-dial is from the Ordnance maps, on which the lines of longitude are accurately marked, and the Greenwich mean time, which is telegraphed daily to most towns and railway stations. If you set your watch by the Greenwich time, and then take your longitude from the map, adding or deducting 4 minutes in time for every degree, and 4 seconds in time for every second of longitude, as your place is east or west of Greenwich, if the sun and clock are together (which is only the case on a few days in the year), you will readily obtain your meridian. Thus the place I reside at is 0 48 deg. west of Greenwich. This is equal to 3 minutes and 8 seconds in time; therefore, on a day when the sun and clock agree, when my watch shows 12h. 3m. 38s., the sun will be on the meridian. Of course the equation table is necessary at all other times.

E. J. V., twenty-five, tall, dark, and good looking; has money. Respondent must be dark and tall.

MAGGIE C., twenty, tall, fair, and pretty, with a little money. Respondent must be dark and tall.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, nineteen, medium height, chestnut hair, gray eyes, fair, and domesticated. Respondent must be of medium height, dark hair, good looking, with a good income.

ADA MAY, twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, affectionate, and fond of home and music. Respondent

to be about twenty-three, tall, dark, steady, fond of home, and resident in London.

ALICE EMILY, nineteen, tall, dark, and handsome, with money. Respondent must be dark and tall.

LILY B., tall, fair, and good looking. Respondent must be of middle height, and have dark hair and eyes; an Irish gentleman preferred.

FLORA, seventeen, medium height, chestnut hair, dark blue eyes, amiable, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, gentlemanly, fond of home, and in easy circumstances.

VIOLA, tall, fair, blue eyes, golden hair, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home, and have 150l. per annum.

A. B., twenty-two, 5ft. 7in., whiskers and moustache. Respondent must be tall, good looking, fair, and accomplished.

D. M., 5ft. 5in., fair, loving, musical, and a good looking lassie.

THOMAS S., tall, dark, and in a respectable situation. Respondent must be fond of home, affectionate, and have a knowledge of the harmonium.

J. W. M. (clerk), 5ft. 5in., fair, good tempered, and affectionate. Respondent must be dark, good tempered, affectionate, play on the piano, and have money.

H. E., twenty-one, dark, musical, and an artist by profession. Respondent should reside in or near Dublin, and have money.

G. D., twenty-three, tall, fair, and good tempered. Respondent must be amiable and domesticated.

FLORENCE, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be of medium height, fair, good looking, and fond of home; a tradesman preferred.

EMILY, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be fair, good looking, and fond of home.

MARY, dark hair and eyes, rather short and stout, and fond of dancing and singing. Respondent must be tall and very dark.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MEDICUS, in No. 364, is responded to by—"Agnes," tall, fair hair, dark blue eyes, good figure, respectfully connected, and has a small income.

J. R. Y. by—"Alice," twenty, medium height, dark, good tempered, and fond of home and music; and—"C. G.," brown hair and eyes, good tempered, and fond of home.

HARRY S. by—"Katie Campbell," tall, fair, with short brown hair; is a gentleman's daughter, and would like to be married.

POLLY B. by—"Fred," 5ft. 6in., fair, fond of home, and affectionate.

JULIA by—"C. V. W. A.," (a seaman in the Navy), 5ft. 5in., light hair, blue eyes, and good tempered.

FLORENCE AMY by—"J. G.," twenty-three, 5ft. 11in., good looking, and in a good position.

ANASTAS H. by—"Julia," twenty-two, who is domesticated, and a very good vocalist and pianist.

VIOLETTA by—"Tom Blunt," twenty-three, 5ft. 7in., black hair, blue eyes, dark complexion, kind, and affectionate.

JACK S. by—"May B.," medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, and fond of music.

ANNETTE by—"R. W.," twenty-one, 5ft. 6in., dark, loving, with good prospects, and fond of home.

ANN by—"Percy," 5ft. 5in., fair, good tempered, fond of home, and in a good position.

G. C. W. by—"S. F. F.," nineteen, medium height, fair, amiable, and fond of home.

STANLEY SINGLAI by—"Annie May," seventeen, tall, fair, brown hair, gray eyes, loving, and fond of home.

FLORENCE B. by—"Stonio" (a mechanic), steady, and fond of home;—"B. L.," twenty-nine, 5ft. 5in., good tempered, steady, and in receipt of good wages; and—"W. F.," twenty-nine, loving, cheerful, and answers to the requirements mentioned by her.

HERBERT wishes "Lily" to write to him and enclose her carte.

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MUSIC—The Maid of My Heart; ballad, composed by Fred. Morton. 2. All Serene; waltz, composed by G. A. Viotti. 3. The Trumpet of Battle; romanza, composed by Maurice Corrie. 4. Tryst of Love; waltz, composed by Karl Emile.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

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